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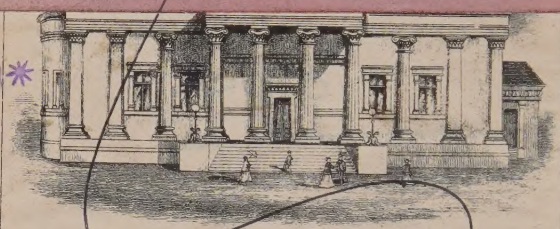

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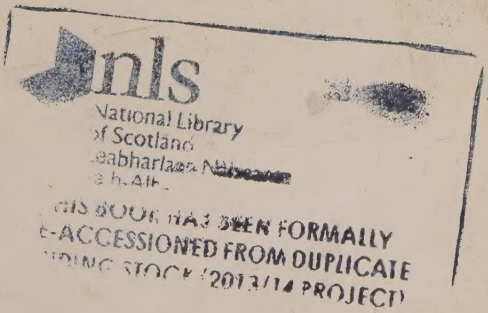

POEMS,

BY THE LATE

ANDREW AITKEN,

OVERTON, NEAR BEITH,

WITH A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

KILMARNOCK:
PRINTED BY JAMES M'KIE, 2 KING STREET.

1873.

KILMARNOCK: PRINTED BY JAMES M'KIE, 2 KING STREET.

Dedicated to

R. W. COCHRAN-PATRICK,

B.A. EDIN., LL.B. CANTAB., F.S.A. SCOT.,

OF WOODSIDE AND LADYLAND.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Memoir of the Author,	vii.
The Arm Chair,	1
The Miser and the Prodigal—a Tale,	5
The Tollman's Ditty,	11
The Toun o' Dalry in 1841,	14
The Auld Fleckit Cow,	18
The Death of the Auld Fleckit Cow,	20
The Back o' the Hill,	22
Montgomerie's Inn, Dalry,	24
The Auld Tappit Hen,	27
The Wife o' Dalry,	28
The Farmer's Lament on the Loss of the Potato Crop, 1846,	30
Epistle to a Friend, on his Marriage,	32
Lines addressed to Dr. R. Patrick—1808,	34
Letter to W. C., Gardener at Caldwell—1805,	36
——— Miss Patrick, Trearne, May, 1805,	38
Crawford o' the Ha',	40
The Village Blacksmith,	42
A Paraphrase on the First Psalm,	44
Lines on hearing the Bell on the Parish Church in Beith, tolled for the first time, 1810,	47
Beauties of Woodside,	49
A Mason Song (Written for a St. John's-day Meeting),	51
Borland's Yill,	52
Guid Oatmeal,	56
Letter to William Swan,	59
Elegy on Hugh Love, Bellman and Gravedigger, Beith, 1805,	62

A Voice from the Ayr Drapers, ... 65
A Response to "A Voice from the Ayr Drapers," 66
Elegy on "Tiger," the House-Dog at Trearne, ... 68
Letter to Robert Anderson, ... 72
Verses to Clegs, ... 74
Lines to Mrs. C. Smith, on her Marriage, ... 76
—— on meeting a Dancing Master, ... 77
Epitaph on the late Dr. R. Wilson, Beith, ... 78
The Hauding o' the Plough, ... 79
Elegy on John Fleming, ... 80
Epitaph of John Fleming, ... 83
Verses to a Snuffer, ... 83
——— after a Land Roup at Balgray, ... 86
The Balgray Rent—March, 1841, ... 89
Josie Strathern, ... 91
Donald Monro, ... 92
The Drunkard's Soliloquy, ... 94
The Auld Man that lived in Beith, ... 95
Lochwinnoch Music and Scones, ... 97
Desperation and Wasteration, ... 99
The Lament of a Careful Person over his old Hat, ... 101
Receipt for making Scandalous Poetry, ... 103
Borland's Porter, ... 105
Lines on seeing a Hawk pursuing a Lark, ... 109
Perry's Elegy, ... 110
Epistle to James Wilson, Thirdpart—1805, ... 112
Verses to a Young Lady, ... 114
Epitaph on a Miser, ... 116
The Muckle Fat Cow, ... 117
The Bed—a Song, ... 119
Verses on the Departure of Thomas Gowans for America, ... 121
Letter to a Student in Glasgow, ... 123
——— D. Caldwell, ... 125

MEMOIR OF ANDREW AITKEN,

OVERTON.

ABOUT a quarter of a century ago, few who had sojourned in, or paid the most temporary visit to, the north-western district of the county of Ayr,—comprised in the parishes of Beith, Kilbirnie, and Lochwinnoch,—but had heard of the poetical powers, and probably experienced the excellent social qualities, of the venerated tenant of Overton. Born in the locality, and reared in all the simplicity of rural life, for more than three score years he had gone out and in before a large number of respectable and influential neighbours,—many of whom considered themselves honoured in numbering him in the circle of their friends,—and to all of whom he was endeared alike by his integrity and sterling worth, as well as by his talents and acquirements in the walks of literature. Modest and unassuming, it was neither his desire nor his fortune to emerge from the comparative seclusion of the station assigned him by Providence; but though it was his lot,

> "Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,
> To hold the noiseless tenor of his way,"

yet who would not consider this more to be desired than the fate of those who, by being suddenly drawn from spheres for which they seemed destined, and in which they might have shone, have been enticed from the paths of moral rectitude,—an undeviating adherence to which constitutes the chief element in a dignified and exemplary character? Himself deeply imbued with the "milk of human kindness," and ever ready to succour the needy and pity the erring, it is not surprising that he should have been an object of endearment, and that his grey hairs should be found in the way of understanding, and that he should have been honoured by men of all ranks and professions. However, it is not merely from his character as a man and a member of society that those feelings of respect arose, but likewise from the standing he attained among the local poets of his native country, and from the fact that, in the pursuit of the immense and varied fund of knowledge that he possessed, he had surmounted difficulties before the very shadow of which many a bold heart would have shrunk. Plodding on for many, many years,—his only reward the simple pleasure derived from the pursuit between extracts from rare and valuable works, and original prose and poetical pieces,—he accumulated several portly volumes of manuscript, which are of themselves a little literary museum. The readers of *Chambers's Journal* and others of our periodicals and newspapers, may have seen various of his scraps,—one of which, "The Tollman's Ditty," at the time of its publication, called forth general approbation and applause.

It could not be supposed that, in a locality where good sense and sound information are so generally diffused, such an

individual could in the least be unappreciated; but though no want of esteem and admiration ever prevailed, it was not till some time passed that they assumed a tangible character, and the resolution was adopted of conferring on him some substantial token of regard. We believe the credit of suggesting this was due to Mrs. Wilson of Lochlands,—a lady well known as being the amiable patroness of literary merit, and the strings of whose heart were only surpassed in pliability with those of her purse, when the object was one which might at all command either sympathy or aid. It was accordingly agreed that a subscription should be opened for the purpose of presenting Mr. Aitken with some article which might be of real advantage to him while he lived, and might descend through his family as an heirloom. The cordial response which this proposal met with from all may be estimated by the fact that, in the course of a short time, a sum was raised sufficient to enable the committee to present Mr. Aitken with an elegant and comfortable chair, and a purse containing forty sovereigns. The judiciousness of selecting such an article must be at once apparent, and the accompanying gift was one which at no time could come wrong. The chair was made by Mr. James Dale, cabinet-maker, Beith, and as a criterion of the excellent character of the work, it may be stated that Mr. Dale received several orders from Glasgow for chairs of a similar construction. The chair is rather of an antique shape,—large and roomy, with a reclining back,—and made of the best oak. The back of the chair is finely carved, and terminates at the top in a coronet, in the centre of which, indented in Roughwood black oak, is a silver plate, bearing the following inscription:—

"Presented to
Andrew Aitken, Farmer, Overton, Beith,
By his friends and fellow-parishioners,
As a mark of their regard
For his private worth and
Literary attainments."

The purse, which was elegantly wrought in silk, was a gift from Mrs. Wilson of Lochlands.

The meeting for the presentation of these articles took place on Friday evening, December 26, 1845, in Mr. Kennedy's Saracen's Head Inn, Beith, when upwards of 160 proprietors, farmers, and merchants, in and around that place, sat down to the refreshments provided. The chair was occupied by William Cochran-Patrick, Esq., of Ladyland and Waterside, who, in calling for a special bumper to the toast of the evening, "The Health of their worthy guest, Mr. Aitken," said:—

"However inadequate I know myself to be to do justice to the toast, I yet feel peculiar satisfaction in the attempt, from the long connection which has subsisted between my family and Mr. Aitken, during which he has possessed the esteem and confidence of those who have gone before, as he retains that of those who still remain. The amiable and inoffensive manners of our guest has endeared him to a wide circle of sincere friends, whilst his strict integrity and industry in the management of an extensive business has secured to him the esteem and respect of all with whom he has commercial dealings. But it is not alone in his private character as an individual member of society, however irreproachable that may have been, but as an author and a poet, that he is our guest to-night. It is, I believe, in the remembrance of most of you now present, that for many successive years annual competitions of cattle were held at Trearne, in this neighbourhood, partly to improve the breed of stock and partly to bring together our friends, tenants, and

neighbours into social intercourse. These meetings, which were given up when more efficient and extensive societies for the same purpose were organised in the district, terminated generally in a friendly and convivial meeting, at which Mr. AITKEN was in the habit of reading an original essay on some agricultural or other useful topic. None of these papers were without merit, and some of them which were submitted to the criticism of those who, from their position and skill, were competent judges, were pronounced by them to be of the highest order. As a poet, Mr. AITKEN'S productions are well known to all of you—many of his effusions having appeared in the periodical publications of the day, and still more of them are familiarly known and recited at the firesides of our far-famed peasantry; but his name is more peculiarly coupled, in the requisition which has called you together this evening, with his latest, but I trust not his last, work. The volume to which I refer is entitled 'Useful Hints, &c.,' and besides containing valuable extracts from upwards of a hundred authors, embodies many original pieces, and an excellent preface written by himself. [After entering at some length into the merits of the work, the Chairman continued]:—The most pleasing part of my duty is yet unfulfilled. I have to present you (addressing Mr. AITKEN) with this handsome and elegant chair, as a testimonial of the respect and esteem in which you are held by your friends and neighbours. Do not, however, conclude from this, that it is either the intention of your friends or myself that you should pass the rest of your days in idleness or inglorious ease, but rather that this may serve as a couch on which to muse when the toils of the day are over, and in which many a pleasing verse may yet be written. In addition, I have to bestow upon you this very handsome purse—itself the gift of a lady—and containing the sum of forty sovereigns, which it is the wish of your friends you should appropriate in whatever way you may think best, either for the promotion of your intellectual enjoyments or your domestic comfort. That you may be long spared to enjoy this testimonial of your friends and acquaintances, is, I am sure, the sincere wish of all present, and in testimony of this I call upon them

to unite with me in drinking a flowing bumper to your continued health and happiness."

The toast was drunk amid the most rapturous applause. Mr. AITKEN then, in his own simple and expressive style, delivered the following remarks, which contain an autobiography to which little can be added:—

"Friends, neighbours, and benefactors, I thank you all; or, in more emphatic language, God bless you all with his best blessings. I would stop here, but that I am expected to say something more; and, at the risk of incurring the charge of egotism, I crave leave to speak a few words about myself. Perhaps a brief sketch of my life may be amusing to some, and instructive to others. I was born in Langside in 1780. My father was by trade a flax dresser, and with this very unhealthy occupation he combined those of farmer and burner and seller of lime. He held all his property—houses, lands, and lime quarry—in tack from Mr. JOHN PATRICK of Trearne, our excellent Chairman's grandfather. I was never at any school; my mother taught me, while very young, the use of the twenty-six letters, and I soon learned to read the historical and biographical parts of the Bible. I was fond of learning to read and write, and often, when other youths were at play, or asleep, I practised until I became a tolerable proficient in these useful branches of learning. By transcribing songs, scraps of poetry, &c., I learned to spell, punctuate, and compose somewhat grammatically. The few works belonging to my father consisted of devotional and polemical divinity, and I was for some time ill off for books, until the late Miss PATRICK of Trearne took me under her care, and supplied me with more fashionable and interesting books out of the family library. I have all along read much, and likewise tried my skill in writing essays of various kinds, several of which Mr. SMITH, our townsman, has been instrumental in making public. To him, as well as to Mrs. SMITH, I am under great and lasting obligations. Mr. SMITH is an industrious, enterprising, persevering man, and eminently useful to the public. And now I stand before you all, a wonder to myself. The

circumstances in which I am placed seem like 'the fabric of a vision.' I can scarcely credit their reality. I am only convinced by ascertaining the tangibility of your munificent gifts. SOLOMON, who often averred that 'there is nothing new under the sun,' yet said he had 'seen servants riding upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth,' and perhaps this incongruity of rank and character was induced by force or violence of some kind; but here I observe a numerous assemblage of the most wealthy, intelligent, and influential inhabitants of the district, withdrawing their attention from the great political, civil, and religious questions which are agitating society, and devoting their time, their means, and their presence, in order to promote the aggrandisement of a very humble individual. Could I persuade myself that I have, in any shape, merited this generous treatment, I would be satisfied. If I have done good, it has always been more of a negative than a positive kind. I know my place in society. I have never stood forth as a leader of any party or faction. I like to follow some important figure; and, as Dr. JOHNSON said he could write a good moral essay upon a broomstick, and as ROCHESTER wrote a good poem upon *nothing*, so I am content to be reckoned a *cipher*, or a *nothing*, that I may be of some use when rightly placed. You all know that

> 'Ciphers, with figures mixed, become
> Of use in making up a sum,
> And well their places fill;
> But he's with double dullness curs'd,
> Whoe'er attempts to place them first,
> For then they're ciphers still.'

To conclude, I see in this respectable meeting one of the promising signs of the age, showing this great truth to be becoming daily more manifest—viz., that if the practice of habitual kindness towards one another could be but judiciously followed, there would be less crime in society, less misery in families, less profligacy in individuals; and we have reason, even from historical evidence, to believe that when man becomes more merciful to man, even the elements themselves will relax their severity, and act in harmony with the spirit of society. God will even accommodate himself to man, according to

the saying of Scripture—'With the froward I will show myself froward; but with the upright I will show myself upright.' We know that in the most barbarous ages the greatest physical calamities occurred—earthquakes that destroyed cities and depopulated provinces, pestilences that swept away men by millions, inundations, such as modern civilisation has nothing to compare with; and the increasing mercy of nature has been keeping time and pace with that of mankind. We have good reason to believe that when man ceases to be sanguinary, revengeful, sectarian, persecutive, bigotted, and controversial, universal nature will present a continuance of corresponding peace and love, and that mercy will look down from heaven when righteousness springs from earth."

During the delivery of his speech, Mr. AITKEN was frequently cheered. He concluded by reading "The Arm Chair," which will be found placed first in this volume. A brilliant night was spent in speech and song. The following song, composed and sung by Mr. ROBERT SHEDDEN, C.E., was received with great applause:—

"HONEST ANDREW AITKEN.

TUNE—'*Dainty Davie.*'

"In Beith, I'm unco proud to say,
Our bard first saw the licht o' day—
We a' are proud, as weel we may,
To honour Andrew Aitken.

CHORUS.

"For Aitken is an honest chiel,
Quiet and honest, quiet and honest,
Aitken is an honest chiel,
Honest, worthy Aitken.

"The Muses stroked his infant face,
And stamped it wi' thoughtfu' grace,
While a' the virtues ran a race
To welcome Andrew Aitken.

" And Aitken's ne'er disgraced their clan,
But still has proved a virtuous man,—
There's few fulfil great Nature's plan
Sae weel as Andrew Aitken.

" Langsyne he spun his hamely rhyme
'Bout Hartfield Moors, the works and lime—
A job was famous in its time,
And sung by youthful Aitken.

" Baith Donald Munro and Joe Strathern
Were sangs the bodies roun' did learn
At Cattle Shows about Trearne—
Wha hasna heard o' Aitken?

" An' still he has a verse to spare
To draper rhymsters doun at Ayr,
And lines upon the oaken chair
We've gien this nicht to Aitken.

" Some foolish bards tak' nae advice,
But sink in folly, rags, and vice—
We wadna inventor their price
Alang wi' decent Aitken.

" For them wha lee, and swear, and grab,
An' file their neighbours wi' their gab,
They're really aff a different wab
Frae honest Andrew Aitken.

" For Aitken's heart is warm and leal,
For human nature frail can feel,
Yet guides himsel' wi' caution weel—
Sae wise is Andrew Aitken.

" Some folk are paid the truth to tell,
But Andrew's plan just fits as well—
His life's a sermon in itsel',
That mak's us proud o' Aitken.

"May goodness on him blessings sen',
Till far ayont three score and ten,
And still be loved by a' that ken
The worth o' Andrew Aitken."

Mr. AITKEN lived about six years after this event. Having received a severe accident by a fall on ice, he never recovered, and died in the month of September, 1851.

Mr. AITKEN was married to JANET FERGUSSON, daughter of Mr. JOHN FERGUSSON, of Dernshaw, parish of Stewarton, and with this wise and excellent woman the old philosopher and poet was enabled to pass the evening of his days in the utmost happiness and tranquillity. Her death preceded his own about a year, and how deeply he felt her loss may be gathered from a poem addressed to old DAVID CALDWELL, a brother poet, who had met with a similar loss, where he says:—

"I, too, am o' my wife bereaved—
The ae best boon I e'er received—
I fondly hop'd she might hae lived
To haud my head
When death approached; but I'm deceived,
For O she's dead.

We will not venture to criticise Mr. AITKEN'S poetry, farther than to say it is mostly of an ethical kind. To the highest flights of imagination or creative genius he did not pretend to soar. His simple intention seems to have been

"To point a moral and adorn a tale;"

and few readers, we suspect, will deny that what he attempted he successfully accomplished. All his poetical effusions which have fallen into the hands of the writer of this Memoir are here given.

POEMS OF ANDREW AITKEN.

THE ARM CHAIR.

POEM COMPOSED BY THE AUTHOR, AND RECITED BY HIM ON BEING PRESENTED WITH A SPLENDID CHAIR, ON 26TH DECEMBER, 1845.

> "First, Necessity invented Stools,
> Convenience next suggested Elbow-Chairs,
> And Luxury the accomplished Sofa, last."
> —COWPER'S "TASK."

What recollections of the past,
Of scenes gone by, and things that were,
Crowd through my mind, whene'er I cast
A look upon my father's chair.

How often have I climbed his knees,
To pat his cheek, and stroke his hair;
The kind, paternal kiss to seize,
When seated in his old arm chair.

And much of monitory love,
Which bade me of the world beware,
His tongue both uttered o'er and o'er,
While resting in his old arm chair.

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When evening call'd us round the hearth,
And storms raged through the wintery air;
What songs and tales of social mirth,
Did issue from the old arm chair!

With summer's toil, and heat o'ercome,
When weary nature sought repair;
Oft did he throw his languid frame,
Exhausted, in his old arm chair.

When adverse fortune crossed his road,
And bowed him down with anxious care;
How oft he sighed beneath the load,
When seated in his old arm chair.

But death, long since, has closed his eyes,
And peacefully he slumbers, where
A grassy turf is seen to rise,—
And fills, no more, the old arm chair.

That chair, which does these scenes recall,
Old age, and wasting worms impair,
Will shortly into pieces fall,
And cease to be an old arm chair.

Yet while its smallest parts remain,
My fancy shall behold him there;
And memory wake these thoughts again,
Of him who filled the old arm chair.

Then, I was thoughtless, healthy, young,
And freely clamb life's uphill stair,
And fondly thought it would be long
E'er I should need a resting chair.

Now I am old, and weak, and lame,
My walk is slow, my bones are bare;
From toil I oft exemption claim,
And seek, at eve, the old arm chair.

Oft have I deemed, should life endure,
And I the ready-cash could spare,
I such convenience would procure—
A good, substantial resting chair.

Peace to the mind which did suggest
This gift, appropriate and rare;
Apt symbol of domestic rest,
Rest, always sweet in easy chair.*

Praise to the artisan, whose skill,
From Roughwood's Moss-oak did prepare
This seat, which Nobleman might fill—
St. Inan ne'er had such a chair.†

Perhaps this oak, king of the wood,
Once screened the wild beast in its lair;
Perhaps beneath its branches stood
The ancient Druids' sacred chair.

---

* People who are in the habit of taking a nap in their resting chair, after dinner, though but for a quarter of an hour, say that they are better refreshed therewith, than by two or three hours' sleep in bed at night.

† The seat in which St. Inan, the tutelar saint of Beith, is supposed to have sat while he instructed the people, is cut out of the solid rock in the brow of a hill, situated in the property of Lochlands. No intelligent person, visiting the antiquities of the locality (and they are many), should depart without inspecting this curious and interesting relic of antiquity.

Their rites, obscure, forgotten be,
This oak, perhaps, once could declare;
But *then*, it was a living tree—
Now, it is but a peasant's chair.

Now, O my friends, what can I do,
But tender you my thanks sincere,
And to my dwelling welcome you
To rest and chat in easy chair.

My thanks, too, for this splendid purse,
Wove by the hands of Lady fair;
Blessed he who finds such helpmate, nurse,—
His life glides as in easy chair.

Health to you all, and peace of mind,
Of fortune's goods, an ample share—
Friends, children, wives, all true and kind,
A blazing fire—an easy chair.

And aye when I sit down to rest,
I'll breathe, for you, a silent prayer,
And cheerfully resign, at last,
My life, in this esteemed arm chair.

And may we all, through aid of Grace,
Escape from every dangerous snare;
And meet, at last, in yon blessed place,
Where none can want an easy chair.

Rhymes have I yet my theme to swell,
To pages nearly half-a-quire:
But, friends, I think 'twill be as well
To cease, and try the Resting Chair!

THE MISER AND THE PRODIGAL:

A TALE.

"Money is first loved as a means of procuring the comforts of life, and people end in loving it for its own sake, and in depriving themselves, in order to preserve it, of these very enjoyments which alone can make it desirable."

To study man, to trace his aims and views,
Is labour worthy of the rural Muse.
To aid the right, discountenance the wrong,
And point out Wisdom's path to old and young—
Teach Virtue's votaries in her ways to run,
And warn the simple, Folly's paths to shun.
To teach and please, be this my constant aim—
The following tale does your attention claim.

'Mang men on earth is many a different state—
Some rich, some poor, some little, and some great.
Life's short and shifting scene we struggle through,
Each with some favourite pursuit in view.
By Folly led, we oft ourselves deceive,
And grasp at shadows, and the substance leave.
Some hoard up wealth, yet never are content,
And in the midst of plenty live in want.
What folly this! from fortune wealth to court,
And lea't to those who will not thank them for't,—
They'll say "he pinch'd himsel', we'll tak' it now,
Then eat and drink, and roar and curse, and spew."

But to our tale, which shall the truth declare,—
There was a man lived near the toun o' Ayr,
Whase way o' life we will attempt to show,
That all wha read may learn and wiser grow.

Aye frae his youth he was inclined to care,
While ithers spent his money, he would spare,
Whan young chaps fairings coft an' looket big,
He slipp'd his bawbees in a *Piner Pig*.*
At school he aften sell'd his bread and cheese,
And gathered preens an' sell'd them for bawbees.
His father dee't, nae hame ava had he,
To his ain fen he gaed an' took a fee.

Would foolish mortals follow Reason's light,
And when they're weel, try to continue right—
Now was the time he hit the happy mark,
He wrought, an' gat guid wages for his wark—
His siller lent, wi' pleasure he would tell
It gain'd as fast as he cou'd do himsell;
He gather'd, view'd, and' sav'd, how happy now,†
For every day he lived, he richer grew.
At length, resolved to change his way o' life,
He made a bauld attempt, and took a wife—

A wife, of earthly gifts, by wisdom's plan,
Designed the best, a helpmate unto man,
Proved not a blessing to a man like this,
But sealed her ain unhappiness and his.

---

* A *Piner Pig* is a small earthenware jar, with a slit in one of its sides, near the top, large enough to admit pieces of money, but from which they are not easily extracted, without breaking the vessel.

† Avarice is a uniform and tractable vice; other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind. That which soothes the pride of one, will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous bring money, and nothing is denied.

She wish'd to live a moderate, frugal mean,
And, by industry, to gang snod and clean:
He wished to save, even every sma' expense
Tho' toom their wames, an' bare their backs at ance.
Now he had siller lent to different han's —
On houses, and on property in lan's;
At length, some partial loss did him alarm,
He gather'd up his stock, an' coft a farm.

And now his paying an' his grief began,
Which kept him always an unhappy man;
A house to bigg, cost him a great expense—
His parks to lime, an' plough, an' drain, an' fence.
A horse an' cart, an' graith, he had to buy
A plough an' harrows, sheep an' swine, an' kye;
'Mang ither events, too, his only son
Was gotten hame, an' by him christen'd John.
Thus howdies, banquets, something every day,
At ilka corner gar'd him draw an' pay.
Sad was his case, for mony a body doubtit
He wad hae dee't, or gane stark mad about it:
His purse gaed toom, ah! desperate, dark despair!
It didna' do, he had to barrow mair.
By various means, howe'er, the farm was stocked,
An' to the saving an' the wark he yocket,
By day he plann'd and wrought, by night he dream'd
O' schemes to get his farm frae debt redeem'd:
This end obtained, he aye grew worse and worse,
An' a' he gain'd was stapit in the purse.
His ain guid corn an' meal he dear did sell,
An' coft auld damaged stuff to ser' themsell:
This auld mool't trash he got about the shore,
They ate less o't, this was a mighty fore! *

* Avarice excludes all natural and social affections from the human breast. It is incompatible with elevation of mind; with

An' whey for kitchen, this was reckon'd fine—
E'en this was grudg'd, because it fed the swine.
An' they brought siller! precious metal!—yes,
His food, drink, claise, his hope, his future bliss.

By this time he was wearin' up in years
An' worn wi' wark, an' grief, an' killin' cares.
His wife she dee't, through grief and sair distress,
Which event did complete his wretchedness;
For she had urg'd him aft, by counsel good,
To tak', and gie the lave baith claise an' food—
Left 'till himsel' an' wealth, he aye turn'd keener,
An' aye the mair he gat, he liv'd the meaner—
He tookna' meat, an' wadna wash his claise,
But gaed in rags, o'ergane wi' dirt an' flaes—
His blankets dune, he wadna' purchase mae,
But sleepit mony a night 'mang rags an' strae.

As he turn'd frail—grown up to manhood, Jock
Soon fand he wasna' used like ither fo'k;
While ither youths war' fed an' clad at will,
He was ill meated, poorer rigget still.
Meanwhile the auld man fail'd—Jock out afiel'
Begude to manage, turn'd a squattrin' chiel;
Jock saw his spirit, but, at hame, ye ken,
The auld man didna' gie him much to spen',
He steal'd at hame, whan he advantage had,
An' barrow'd sums, an' rov'd awa' like mad.
These things, wi' grief, the auld man heard an' saw,
Could not prevent them, had to yield up a';
Unweal he turned, cou'd tak' nae meat, grew faint,

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benevolence, generosity, humanity, confidence, and candour; with love and true friendship; with paternal tenderness and filial affection. What virtue then remains for the miser? What happiness can a man without moral goodness enjoy?

Wad tak' nae cordials, dee't wi' perfect want—*
An' left his precious gear to ither folk—
It ne'er was his, nor wad it bide wi' Jock.

Jock, master now, begude to act wi' spirit,
Providin' things to get his father buried.
"He's left me plenty," Jock was heard to say,
"He pinch'd me lang, we'll hae ae jolly day."
The day was cauld, the liquor guid an' strong,
An' freely it was drunk by auld an' young.
Lang graces, too, were said, while some did nod—
They gat him out, at last, an' took the road—
Fast they gaed on, an' dash'd thro' thick an thin,
While some were comin' singin' far ahin.
"He," cried auld men wi' dirt bedaubed claes,
"Ne'er gaed to toun sae merry a' his days!"
Some fell an' spew't, the stoutest onward drave,
An' gat the auld man happit in his grave.

Frae clags an' claims, debts an' mortages clear—
A farm weel worth a hundred pounds a year,
Besides the stock of gear, which wasna' sma',
An' siller likewise, Jock was laird o' a'.
His father's guid auld warks he did despise,†
(Folk that are rich soon fancy they are wise),
He bigget houses, muckle, stark, an' fine,
Heigh garden dykes, an' fruit trees plantet syne;
Coft a new gig, kept bluid-mares—races ran;
Rade bruises too, an' mighty wagers wan,

* Seneca says, "many things are wanting to the indigent—the miser wants everything." Quevedo tells us "that a miser is a man who knows where a treasure is hidden." It is possible, after all, that a miser, as well as a devotee, may *enjoy* his privations; but to want fuel in winter, and food when hungry, are evils nevertheless. The miser would doubtless prefer to be well lodged, well clothed, and well fed, if it cost him nothing.

† "We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so."

Had hounds an' pointer-dogs, o' various breeds—
Catch'd maukins, partricks shot—did manly deeds.
Horse couper turn'd, lee't, bred an' unco steer,
An' cheatet simple bodies far an' near,
Now he was seldom seen at hame ava'—
Wad ye him seek? then at the yill-house ca'.
He learn'd to swear, an' stay'd, without regard,
'Mang dyvour chiels, wha praised, an' ca'd him laird;
They drank, he pay't; naught pleased sae muckle now
As drinking hard, and filling ithers fu'.
His cash gaed doon—sell't ae park, syne anither,
Till, park an' park, he sell't it a' thegither.
'Maug money a plan, at length he hit the nailer—
Gaed to the toun an' turn'd a spirit-dealer.
Here for some time he did enjoy his wish,
He sell't and drank himsel' like ony fish;
But, scarce o' cash again, he forged a bill,
An' smuggled whisky, an' did muckle ill.
For justice feared, this hardened vile offender
Turned bankrupt, fled, an' gaed aboard the tender.

Reader, remind my tale, with deep concern;
From such examples usefu' wisdom learn.
While misers starve amidst their stores o' wealth,
And drunkards waste their money and their health;
Strive thou, with prudence, both extremes to shun—
Distant from both a happy medium run.
What heaven bestows with thankfulness receive,
With reason take, and taste, enjoy, and live.

My design in writing and publishing the foregoing tale is not merely to raise a laugh at the follies and sufferings of erring mortals, but to delineate the evil of covetousness on the one hand, and prodigality on the other, and warn people from running into extremes of every kind; for it is only in the way of receiving with thankfulness, and using in moderation, the various gifts of Providence, that we can be useful and happy through life, and terminate our days with honour and safety.

THE TOLLMAN'S DITTY.

I ha'e plough'd, I ha'e delv'd, cutted hay, shorn and thrashed,
An' howked baith limestone an' coal;
I ha'e tried mony a shift for a wee bit o' bread,—
But the warst ane was keepin' a Toll!

Ye glour at me now, wi' suspicious regard,
An' say my assertion is droll;
For ye've nae mair to do but to haud out your han',
An' receive your bawbees, at a Toll.

Gif bawbees be gotten, it's aft wi' a grudge,
Or a jeer that is whyles ill to thole;
Not as money that's awn, but bestow'd as an alms,
On the puir beggar-man at the Toll.

"I'm gaun to the smiddy," ane cries, or "the plough,"
Or, "the grass wi' my mare an' my foal;"
There is aye some excuse, for few think it a sin,
To cheat the puir man o' the Toll.

For the fo'k gane to toun, lang the toll-keeper watches
Till, drowsy an' blin' as a mole,
His patience worn out, he retires to bed grieved,
At the want o' his rest an' the Toll.

Then he's nae sooner down till the horses are prancing
An' the wheels on the causeway loud roll;
An' he fin's, to his grief, that he never will get
Either money or rest at a Toll.

On Sunday, when fo'ks gang in fashion's array,
To hear the divine read his scroll;
Then the carts, cars, an' gigs, are in special request,
For they drive on without paying Toll.

Frae the toll-house religion benign takes her flight,
(For the Bible maun lie in the bole,)
E'en its form, ceremonial, can scarce be observ'd,
Mid the *nights* an' *days* watching the Toll.

The toll-keeper, too, maun look surly an' rough,
The lads wi' the whips to control;
His cry maun be loud, an' his arm prone to strike,
Or he'll ne'er get the half o' his Toll.

Yet wha wad despise the puir toll-keeper's trade,
But the proud or the stupid clodpole;
For men of all place, or profession, or rank,
What are they but lifters o' Toll?

Ane ushers us into the world at our birth,
Anither ane howks our last hole;
During life mutual service is render'd, 'tis true,
But it's a' for the sake o' the Toll.

The priest prays an' preaches wi' fervour an' zeal,
To free us frae sin an' frae dole;
Though the wark be divine, yet he'll no' speak a word,
Till he ken wha's to pay him the Toll.

The law-man prolongs your plain cause through long years,
(For he ettles to seize on the whole,)
His harvest o' wealth is insolvent distress—
There, he's certain o' getting his Toll.

Frae the Queen on the throne, to the puir gaberlunzie,
Wha roun' for a morsel does stroll,
The powerfu' and wealthy *demand* what's their due;
An' the poor,—they *solicit* for Toll.

When fierce comets blaze, boding skaith to the nations,
An' frost an' sna' come frae the pole:
Mad wars, ruin'd trade, an' the glebe's scanty produce,
Scrimps mony a ane o' the Toll.

Had I a wee house, an' a weel shelter'd yard,
Near a burn, on a bonie green knoll;
I wad live there in peace, quite regardless and easy,
Wha flait or wha faught to get Toll.

For the boy wi' his peerie, his dragon, or hoop,
Or the wee lassie busken her doll,
Is mair happy, contented, and cheer'd in bright hope,
Than the man 'mong the coins at a Toll.

Yet a dark jail itsel' a wish'd refuge has prov'd,
To mony a toil-worn-out soul;
Sae there's plenty are glad, in their auld days to dree
Baith the scaith an' the scorn o' a Toll.

THE TOUN O' DALRY, IN 1841.

"Knowledge, by time, advances slow and wise,
Turns everywhere its deep discerning eyes;
Sees what befell, and what may yet befall;
Concludes from both, and best provides for all."

It is said naething new e'er appears in this world,
The assertion, wi' leave, I will flatly deny—
Just look what a number o' new and strange objects
Are seen ilka day near the toun o' Dalry.

The sage, I hae quoted whyles err'd, like his neibors,
Though gifted wi' wisdom an' skill frae on High;
An' he trewd nought ava about steam-power or rail-roads,
An' mony thing else at the toun o' Dalry,

Langsyne our guid sires trudged to kirk an' to market
On dirty clay roads wi' their feet seldom dry;
An' whan muckle spates cam', an' the nights dark an' stormy,
There war fo'k droun'd in burns near the toun o' Dalry.

Locomotion has now become safe, cheap, an' speedy;
For there's brigs o'er the Garnock, the Cauf, an' the Rye*
And, on roads made o' iron, hurl fire impelled chariots,
Far outstripping the wind, past the toun o' Dalry.

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* The names of three beautiful streams of water, which flow from the hills, lying to the north and west, and which nearly encompass the village.

We breakfast and mount, puff, puff, goes the engine,
An' aff wi' the speed o' winged seraph's we fly;
Across auld braid Scotland on business or pleasure,
An' sup here at e'en, in the toun o' Dalry.

The brave clan MacDonald aye first o' the foremost,
In the dangers of war when fierce foemen drew nigh—
Though they've sheathed their claymores, yet their raging fires threaten
To burn a' the coals near the toun o' Dalry.

Tall chimneys appear, an' big fires fiercely lowing,
Whar the farmer of late fed his sheep an' his kye—
An' lochs o' fused metal like the boilings o' Etna,
Drawn frae mines digged deep near the toun o' Dalry.

An' the strong blast is heard, and the stroke o' the hammer,
An' the spark, yet unquenched, that for liquor does cry;
For the famed fabled feats done in Vulcan's het smiddy,
Are now realized near the toun o' Dalry.

By Drakemyre we descend—see the claith-spread enclosures,
Emblazoned by every bright colour and dye;
Saint Margaret hersel', ne'er displayed sic braw dresses,
As are worn ilka day by the wives o' Dalry.

Langsyne near the Cleaves bank, the Pencot, and Lissens,
The fairies, elfs, brounies (a queer motely fry),
Wrought wark for sma' hire, and whyles tricked their masters,
But now, a's done by steam at the toun o' Dalry.

An' the fires are but kindling—mair steam will be wanted,
Which the water o' Garnock will hardly supply;
For the skill, an' the strength, an' the meat, an' the siller,
Are gathering in fast to the toun o' Dalry.

For the time may come yet, wha can tell what's to happen.
Whan this sma' rural toun wi' big Glasgow may vie;
Great things rise frae little, for Glasgow at ae time,
Was just a wee spat like the toun o' Dalry.

Auld Ayr, famed in sang, will revive frae her slumbers,
But Beith in the back-grund for some time maun lie,
Her smugglers are dead, an' her sons hand-loom weavers,
An' she's far frae the road where wealth flows to Dalry.

'Mang the faithfu', langsyne, was auld granny Kilwinning,
Whase relics o' priestcraft times, changes defy;
Nae mair she can tax a' the parishes roun' her—
She maun set on the steam like the fo'k o' Dalry.

Would our morals improve wi' our wealth an' our knowledge—
If we frae experience some wisdom could buy,
We might hail as a boon a' these great speculations
Matured an' gaun on roun' the toun o' Dalry.

Hope bids us believe true reform is progressing,
Through the mist o' prospective good days we espy,
When oppression will cease, and the arts, humanising,
Will be practised a' wheres as they are at Dalry.

Railroads will be form'd between nation and nations,
On the earth, o'er the ocean, or up in the sky;
An' fo'k o' a' climes will come here wi' their produce,
An' get iron an' bra' claith at the toun o' Dalry.

I hae rhymes yet in store to fill up several pages,
But, guid reader, remember that baith thee an' I
Hae some jobs else to do, for the way times are going,
Idle fo'k are nae use at the toun o' Dalry.

There's whyles little for working, but less to gang idle,
An' we aft dinna ken how we'll speed till we try;
Success doesna always reward the deserving—
An' there's muckle at stake near the toun o' Dalry.

Meanwhile, do ye wish to get place, wark, an' wages,
Step doun on the train, an' to Condie * apply:
He'll soon scan you throughly an' set you to some job,
Aboon or below near the toun o' Dalry.

Or are ye for fun, put twa pounds in ye're pocket—
Ye'll get a' sorts o' drink, a beef steak, or a pie,
Obsequious attendance, an' a reel for amusement,
In Colligan's † Ha' in the toun o' Dalry.

Whan ye're tired looking roun', up to Beith tak' a dander;
Keep the muckle black tower on the kirk in your eye;
Ye'll obtain what ye want, just as guid, aiblins cheaper,
Than ye'll buy in the thrang o' the shops o' Dalry.

•

Let naebody say I am partial to places;
On the poor rhymer's verses o' dinna look shy;
Though muckle's been said, its wi' nae ill intention—
I wad like to see a' places thrive like Dalry.

---

* J. Condie, at that time manager of Blair Ironworks.

† P. Colligan, a celebrated dancing master, and landlord of the King's Arms Inn.

THE AULD FLECKIT COW.

Frae the well we get water, frae the heugh we get fuel
Frae the rigs we get barley, frae the sheep we get woo';
Frae the bee wi get hinny, an' eggs frae the chuckie,
An' plenty o' milk frae our auld fleckit cow
An' o', my dear lassie, be guid to auld fleckie,
Wi' the best o' hay-fodder, an' rips frae the mou;
Boil'd meat in a bakie, warm, mix'd up wi' beanmeal,
For it's a' weel bestowed on the auld fleckit cow.

She's wee, an' she's auld, and she's lame, an' she's hammilt,
An' mair than sax years she's been farrow, I trow;
But she fills aye the luggie, baith e'ening an' morning,
An' rich creamy milk gi'es our auld farrow cow.
An' o', my dear lassie, be guid to auld fleckie,
An' dinna gie a' the guid meat to the sow;
For the hens will be craikin', the ducks will be quakin',
To wile the tid-bites frae the auld farrow cow.

She ne'er breaks the fences, to spoil corn an' 'tatoes,
Contented, though lanely, the grass she does pu';
She ne'er wastes her teeth munching stanes or auld leather,
But cannie, lying doun, chews her cud when she's fu'.
Then o', my dear lassie, be guid to auld fleckie,
An' min' that she just gies her milk by the mow;
An' we'll still get braw kebbucks, an' nice yellow butter,
An' cream to our tea, frae the auld fleckit cow.

In the byre she's aye cannie, nor e'er needs a burroch.
But gie's her milk freely whene'er it is due;
Wi' routing, an' rairing, she ne'er deeves the neighbours—
They ne'er hear the croon o' the auld fleckit cow.
An' o', feed her weel wi' the sappy red clover,
Green kail, yellow turnips, an' cabbage enow:
For she's whyles in the house, an' her gang's no' that birthy,
The grass is owre sour for our milky auld cow.

When clegs, flies, an' midges, or hornets, molest her,
Or cauld, stormy weather brings danger in view;
In her ain warm wee housie, frae harm's-way protect her, –
I'm fear'd something happen our auld fleckit cow.
An' my guid tentie lassie will wed some guid farmer,
Wi' bonnie green parks baith to graze an' to plow;
White sheep, an' milk kye, o' the best breeds o' Ayrshire,
For muckle she's made out the auld fleckit cow.

We'll no pairt wi' auld fleckie for some years to come yet,
A' our lang life-time, that deed sair we wad rue;
For she hasna a calf to haud fu' the binnin',
And fill up the place o' the auld fleckit cow.
Sae, O my guid lassie, remember auld fleckie,
An' feed her, an' milk her, as lang's she will do;
We hae aye been weel ser'd, an' she's noo awn us naething,
But we'll ne'er get a match to the auld fleckit cow.

O leese me on milk, its the food o' the baby,
O' the strong blooming youth, an' the auld bodie too;
Our gentles may sip at their tea an' their toddy,
But gie me the milk o' the auld fleckit cow.
An' O my kind lassie, the spring time is coming,
An' the grass it will grow, an' we'll hear the cuckoo;
The laverocks will sing, an' we'll a' tread the gowan,
An' drink the rich milk o' our ain hammilt cow.

O the dames o' the south boast their flocks o' milk camels,
Their bread-bearing trees, an' their huts o' bamboo;
An' the wives o' the north hae their seals an' their reindeer,
But we hae oatmeal an' the auld fleckit cow.
An' O my dear Peggy, we're thankfu' for mulloch,—
Sad care and distrust ne'er shall darken our brow;
An' I wish a' the house-keeping fo'k in the nation
Cou'd sup the pure milk o' their ain fleckit cow.

N.B.—This cow was the property of the late Mrs. Harvey of Balgray. She had been six years farrow, at the time this song was written, and continued to give an astonishing quantity of milk. "If good well-fed cows give their own weight in cheese, through the year, it is deemed an ample return; but this little animal will not feed above 19 stones imperial, yet she produced, *last year*, 25 stones of sweet milk cheese—besides serving the family with what butter and milk they needed."

THE DEATH OF THE AULD FLECKIT COW.

TUNE—*Jenny's Bawbee.*

The auld fleckit cow's dead,
Our guid farrow cow's dead,
The widow's ae cow's dead,
An' what will we do now?
She ser't us weel wi' milk an' whey,
An' muckle cheese we sell'd forby,
For seven years she ne'er gaed dry—
She was a noble cow.

O did she dee for lack o' meat?
Did Margaret gie her nought to eat?
Her teeth gaed doon, lame grew her feet,
The grass she couldna pu'.
Into the park, whar lang she gaed,
Our roadman, John, wi' shool an' spade,
Prepar'd a grave, an' there was laid
Our guid auld fleckit cow.

To neibour John, our thanks are due,
For frae his byre he sent a cow,
To gie us milk the winter through—
Sic frien'ly chaps are few:
But O she was a wayward jade,
She croon'd an' lap the dykes like mad,
To join the laird's big rowting squad,
Unlike our douse auld cow.

Now winter gently aff does pass,
An' Johnny's cow gaes to the grass,
An' we, my dears, can't live on gas,
Its rather thin I trow:
For O my maids, weel may ye fa',
Its meat an' drink that mak's ye braw,
An' sae our purse-strings we maun draw
An' buy anither cow.

Fain would I try to rear a calf,
But that would tak' owre lang by half;
I'm frail, or I wad tak' my staff,
An' seek the kintra through;
But John, our frien', or Tandlehill,
Will ware a wee while's time an' skill
Auld fleckie's empty boose to fill
Wi' some bit milky cow.

Some thrifty wives keep ducks an' hens,
An' geese, to bring up odds an' en's,
An' mony a ane nae better kens,
Than feed a nasty sow:
But 'mang the beasts, baith wild an' tame,
On sea or lan', abroad, at hame,
Gie me a choice—I rest my claim
Upo' the usefu' cow.

OVERTON, 1843.

THE BACK O' THE HILL.

(Inscribed to Mrs. D. Wilson.)

I hae seen splendid cities, and strong-towering castles,
Erected with money, hard labour, and skill;
But I ne'er saw a snug, neat, secure rural dwelling,
Like the cottage that stands at the back o' the hill.

The fierce wind may war a' aroun' on the uplands,
And winter's cauld breath vegetation may chill;
But the tempest is hushed, or just heard at a distance,
Frae the cottage doon-bye, at the back o' the hill.

The green braes yield milk, corn, potatoes, and honey,
And pure water trickles frae spring an' frae rill;
Easy labour gives health—health ensures full fruition,
An' there's nae fear o' want at the back o' the hill.

The master is sober, industrious, and generous,
An', at hame an' afiel', weel his station does fill;
An' the mistress is frank, cheerfu', youthfu', an' bonnie,
And beloved by the man at the back o' the hill.

Our great fo'ks wha strive for fame, riches, and honour,
But are never lang pleased, e'en tho' gie them their will,
Should repair to this spot, and adopt the example
O' the couple that live at the back o' the hill.

Crimes and poortith would cease—there wad be nae oppressors,
Nor men, whase profession is ithers to kill;
Fo'k wad live as they ought, in fraternal affection,
An' their dwellings would be like the back o' the hill.

On rare holidays, toun-mechanics and merchants—
Clerks, students, and people confined to the mill—
Find their health, both of body and mind, much promoted,
By a stroll through the glen at the back o' the hill.

And the ground that they tread, was in ancient times, holy,
For numerous memorials are visible still,
Of the altars, the circles, and cairns of the Druids,
On the summit, an' roun' by the back o' the hill.

Here the song of devotion and praise has ascended;
Here fierce clans hae fought, when the war-pipe blew shrill;
But their feuds, an' their deeds, an' their names are forgotten,
For they sleep in the cairn at the back o' the hill.

The chase, love, and war, furnish themes great and noble
For the eloquent spokesman, the pencil, and quill;
But the loud trump o' fame is ne'er heard, not yet wanted,
At the tranquil retreat roun' the back o' the hill.

But the man wha can taste the rich gifts o' fair fortune,
An' gie ithers their due, an' yet naething does spill,
May count on true friends, both in deed and in purpose,
In the cottage o'erby at the back o' the hill.

Our existence is chequered wi' pain and wi' pleasure,
Whae'er shares o' the guid, maun partake o' the ill;
But few real ills would afflict foolish mortals,
Would they live like the fo'k at the back o' the hill.

MONTGOMERIE'S INN, DALRY.

(Recited before the Burns' Club, January 26, 1842.)

Time soon slips awa', for its saxteen lang towmonds
Since our social Burns' club did begin;
And we've annually met, on this night most auspicious,
In Johnny Montgomerie's Inn.

We hae sang o' the bard—in his fame we've rejoiced,
An' drank to the health o' his kin;
The poets deceased, and alive, we hae toasted,
When met in Montgomerie's Inn.

But the fame of our bard has extended already
As far through the earth as't can win,
Sae we can add naething thereto by our meeting
This night in Montgomerie's Inn.

On our ain account, then, we assemble this evening,
And, though cynics may count it a sin,
We get happy, at least, ay ae night o' the season,
On the best in Montgomerie's Inn.

Its just theecket wi' strae, an' but laigh o' the ceiling,
That we scarce can stan' up straight within,
But there's aye something guid, baith for eating an' drinking,
To be had in Montgomerie's Inn.

Frae the women fo'k, first, we derive our existence,
And maist o' the guid that we fin' ;
Sae if happy just now, thank the care and attention
Of the wife o' Montgomerie's Inn.

Of the wife o' Dalry much has been said an' written,
But there's wives in Dalry mae than ane
That are crouns to their husbands—guid bless them a' halesale,
Wi' the wife o' Montgomerie's Inn.

There are wives that can bear, an' can nurse up braw bairnies,
Bake scones, sew, mak' kebbucks, an' spin ;
But there's few that can mix up a haggis sae nicely,
As the wife o' Montgomerie's Inn.

Burns sang o' a haggis—its ample dimensions,
Ingredients rich, and clear skin ;
But ne'er chieftain pudding deserved a " bethankit "
Like ours in Montgomerie's Inn.

May he beg for a scone, or a cauld boiled potatoe,
Wha wad saucily toss up his chin
At the hamely substantials o' life, thus prepared,
By the wife o' Montgomerie's Inn.

When the landlord comes up wi' a smile on his visage,
Wi' the stoup fu' o' whisky or gin,
Inspired we become, sing, recite droll effusions,
Wi' birr, in Montgomerie's Inn.

An' its natural we shou'd ; when the bag is weel filled
The drone pipes commence making din ;
An' we're whyles something loud, but we're never discordant,
When met in Montgomerie's Inn.

Some chaps, we aft see, wi' sic plenty to guzzle,
Are neither to haud nor to bin',
But wad swear, fight, break jugs, and alarm a' the neibours,
Far an' near, roun' Montgomerie's Inn.

Sic fools should gae join Father Matthew's tea-totals,
An' evermore keep in the pin,
Or come doun to Dalry, an' learn mair wise-like conduct
Frae our club at Montgomerie's Inn.

We hae met aye weel pleas'd, wi' regret we hae parted;
An' gif I be na' crippl'd an' blin',
I'll mak' shift, my guid frien's, whyles to crawl doun an' see ye
In far-famed Montgomerie's Inn.

Our tried trusty chairman, * wha lang has stood by us
Untired, through thick an' through thin;
We owe much to his guidance—his place he well merits
This night in Montgomerie's Inn.

Old time, year by year, brings about muckle changes,
At twice railroad-speed let it rin;
We'll aye houp for the best, an' perhaps taste the haggis
Neist year, in Montgomerie's Inn.

But distress stalks abroad, and increasing privation, †
An' a' bodies fa'in' ahin',
An' muckle may we see, to the waur or the better,
Ere we meet in Montgomerie's Inn.

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* Andrew Crawford, of Courthill—since emigrated to America.

† At this period, the inhabitants of Paisley and several other manufacturing towns and villages, were nearly in a starving condition.

THE AULD TAPPIT HEN.

O my mither was guid to the weans an' the servants,
The horses, the kye, an' a' things but-an'-ben;
They were aye stout an' cheery, an' fit for their labour,
As ye'll hear frae my sang on the auld tappit hen.

The auld tappit hen, it was douse, it was canny,
The egg-layin' time it fu' brawly did ken;
When the doors were a' steekit, it rapp't at the winnock,
An' aye letten in, was the auld tappit hen.

My mither sat spinnin' sma' yarn for the merchant, *
Sax spindles a pun', an, whyles aught, an' whyles ten;
The hen aye flew up on her knee, an' tauk-tauket,
An' weel mither kenn'd what was said by the hen.

For, she lifted it up, on her ain bed she placed it—
On its aye welcome errand, short time it did spen';
When a due meed o' praise, boil'd gray pease, or hard barley,
Was aye the reward o' the auld tappit hen.

An egg every day, for sax weeks, without missing,—
But the blithe e'enin' bell had dismiss'd the warkmen,
And the hens were at roost, ere it made its last offering,
An' mother had gi'en the last pick to her hen.

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* Between fifty and sixty years ago, before the introduction of the cotton manufacture, spinning of linen yarn was one of the staple trades of this country. The *spinning-wheel* was an indispensible domestic utensil amongst industrious housekeepers.

For it dec't—but it wasna' by auld age or hunger,
Nor yet by *Tod-lowrie* broke loose frae his den;
But the big horses foot in the darkness o' gloaming,
Unconscious o' harm, crush'd the auld tappit hen.

An' sadly we grieved at the fate o' auld tappock;
Lang, lang, mother mourn'd o'er its tragical en';
But though hirsel on hirsel o' chickens were hatched,
She ne'er gat a match to her auld tappit hen.

On the feather'd creation grand books hae been written,
An' their habits explored thro' the forest an' glen,
They've been priz'd for their sang, and admir'd for their plumage,
But the bird for man's use is a guid laying hen.

"The domestic hen will lay about two hundred eggs in a year provided she be well fed, and well supplied with water and liberty. If left to herself she would seldom lay above twenty eggs in the same nest without attempting to hatch them; but in proportion as she lays, when her eggs are removed, she continues to lay, vainly hoping to increase the number. In the wild state, the hen seldom lays above fifteen eggs, but then her provision is more precariously obtained, and she is perhaps sensible of the difficulty of maintaining too numerous a family.—GOLDSMITH."

THE WIFE O' DALRY.

Owre lang hae our bards lauded wars an' dram-drinking,
But wi' auld foolish customs nae mair we'll comply;
We'll hae new reform sangs, an' by way o' example,
I'll gie you twa verse on the wife o' Dalry.

Wi' the wives, I confess, I am nane fond to meddle,
Against me they'll raise up a hue an' a cry;
But the truth should be tauld, that baith they an' the lasses,
May learn something guid frae the wife o' Dalry.

Her house is but wee, but its neat an' weel-plenished,
Wi' a' things to please baith the mind an' the eye;
An' the rich an' the poor, an' the young an' the aged,
Are aye kindly used by the wife o' Dalry.

Some wives daily stroll just to hear an' tell clashes,
While their houses at hame are like ony pig-stye:
They should just bide at hame an' begin some industry,
An' snod themsells up like the wife o' Dalry.

Some termagant dames, on the least provocation,
Wi' tongue an' wi' nieves a' their neighbours defy;
But at peace wi' hersel', an' at peace wi' the warld,
A peacemaker aye is the wife o' Dalry.

Ithers fare on the best, at their ain secret table,
An' scarce gie the lave wee potatoes an' whey;
An' the sly selfish sluts are ne'er well, an' eat naething;
But a' fare alike wi' the wife o' Dalry.

Guid men mak' guid wives, an' guid wives mak' guid husbands:
This plan I'd hae a' married people to try;
Here's a case just in point, which is proof to their liking,
For few wives hae men like the man o' Dalry.

Ye chaps wha live single, awa' an' get married,
For the raip's easy broke that consists o' ae ply:
Ye'll hae nae cause to rue, if ye just be sae lucky,
As light upon wives like the wife o' Dalry,

Young women, nae doubt, ye're a' fond to get wedded,
An' it's pity sae mony in loneliness sigh,
I'll just gie ae hint, ye wad soon a' get offers,
Were men sure ye wad prove like the wife o' Dalry.

Mind that beauty an' youth are but for a brief season,
An' riches aft spread out their pinions an' fly;
But the virtuous enjoy the reward o' their labours,
An' praise in the gate, like the wife o' Dalry.

THE FARMER'S LAMENT ON THE LOSS OF THE POTATOE CROP, 1846.

I gaed up the lang loan to condole wi' the farmer,
An' after a lang hoch-hey an' grane,
He said "I am vex'd, an' amaz'd, an' maist ruin'd,
For my big park o' 'tatoes is gane.

"I drain'd, delved, and plough'd, an' manur'd it richly —
An' coft dear seed frae Johnny Maclaine;
An' thought I wad pay a' my rent wi' the produce,
But my dear field o' 'tatoes is gane.

"Only twa weeks ago it was green, healthy, prosperous,
An' now its a black mournfu' scene;
Ye wad scarce get a meal aff a muckle Scotch acre.
For my guid bulky 'tatoes are gane.

"An' the swine, an' the auld farrow cow that I'm fat'nin'
Will be naething but bare skin an' bane;
An' the kye 'ill gang yell, an' the hens 'ill quat laying,
For my precious potatoes are gane.

"I hae whyles sell'd potatoes at fourpence the big peck,
Now they're mair than twa shillings the stane;
An' mony a place, canna' be gotten for siller,
For our noble potatoes are gane.

"They were food to the rich, they were meat to the poor—
To the aged, an' the wee toddlin' wean;
E'en the sick and diseased aft could relish a murphy—
But our fine mealy 'tatoes are gane.

"But O for ae great muckle patfu' o' boiled anes,
Either cooked wi' kitchen, or nane;
I wad surely enjoy ae complete hearty wamefu',
But no, my potatoes are gane.

"Now, our chemical testers o' sails, plants, an' manures,
May see that their notions are vain;
They ken nought o' the *cause* or the *cure* o' this evil,
But can just say as I say—they're gane."

I harken'd awhile wi' some grief an' vexation,
To the auld farmer's sorrowfu' mane,
I cou'd weel sympathise, for I likewise had suffered—
My sma' patch o' 'tatoes was gane.

I replied, "think again, your case is na' bad yet—
Ye hae butter, cheese, turnips, an' grain,
A' fetching high prices, while I maun buy a' things,
An' the warst thing—my siller is gane.

Had your sons died in strife, or your cattle by murrain,
Or blight your fair corn fields had ta'en;
Had want and disease left you friendless an' helpless,
Ye might weel hae said a' things are gane.

Rejoice in the blessings God's goodness has left you,
An' trust him to bring back again
This much esteemed root, or produce something better,
If the 'tatoe for ever be gane.

We will live upon oatmeal, wheat, maize, rice, and sago,
An' the juice o' the sweet sugar cane;
But O! what will mony a poor body suffer,
Ere the plenty return that has gane."

OVERTON, *January, 1847.*

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND, ON HIS MARRIAGE.

Now Jamie, ye hae got a wife
  At hame, wha's sure an' certain
To be a bosom friend for life,
  An' share your varied fortune.

In prosperous times to share your joys—
  'Mid hardships to befriend you;
And nurse the pretty girls an' boys
  That Heaven may please to send you.

Lang may ye live, a happy pair,
  And by your joint endeavours,
May ye enjoy an ample share
  O' Fortune's choicest favours.

And e'en tho' simple be your feast,
  With peace and love endearing,
And sweet content to croun the rest,
  'Tis cheer aboon a cheering.

May bankrupt villains ne'er divest
  You o' your hard-won earnings;
Nor cruel beagles e'er infest
  Your doors wi' poinds an' hornings.

With strict fidelity fulfil
  Each charge to you intrusted:
With wisdom, order, prudence, skill,
  Be all your plans adjusted.

In your expenses ne'er exceed
  The gains by your exertion;
But, for some future time o' need,
  Keep something in reversion.

Nor e'er, my friend, expect to find
Prosperity unmixed;
For, like the rest o' human kind,
Ye will be aften vexed.

By friends deceived, by foes assailed,
Your hopes will aft be blasted;
Nor will your prospects always yield
The promised good, when tasted.

Your ardent genius dont confine
When prudence marks his measure;
But always study to combine
Profit alang wi' pleasure.

And when your focal tube you rear
To scan yon orbs resplendent,
And make them glorious suns appear,
With countless worlds attendant.

Or turn your prying optics doun,
Unveiling many a nation
Of insect people, erst unknown,
To human observation. *

Observe God's wisdom, goodness, power,
Marked on the hale creation,
And train your active mind to soar,
In lofty contemplation.

Keep Virtue's path: there men of worth
Hae aye found safety given;
There, you'll be happy while on earth,
There, on the way to Heaven.—A. A.

Overton, 1816.

* The individual addressed was an ingenious Optician.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. R. PATRICK—1808.

Once more the rustic muse, in homely strains,
Would welcome you hame to your native plains—
Would welcome you frae distant care and toil,
In Scottish air to rest and breathe a while:
Would you accept the grateful tribute due,
The best, she at this time, can offer you.

When ye were hame, I mind, in former days,
Ye aften read my lines, an' gied them praise;
And aften, too, I did my sang renew,
Pleased to be noticed by men like you.
But when the martial trumpet loud did blaw,
Honour and duty bade you rise and go;
For when your country sought your helping aid,
You shun'd the life of ease in rural shade,
To join the ranks where Britain's sons advance
To check the ambitious growing power of France—
To bear your part in this most bloody war,
Which thunders loud and louder from afar.
May this tremendous contest soon be o'er,
And Peace diffuse her blessings round each shore;
Then Britain's war-worn sons from far would come
And yet enjoy all they hold dear at home.
Meanwhile, by merit raised to honours great,
By Providence to wealth and high estate;
May you aye prosper as you onward go;
May your career aye bright and brighter grow;
May you enjoy, while aiding virtue's cause,
The praise of others, and blest self-applause.

But, having served your country without blame,
Sir, ye might tak' a thought an' stay at hame,
An' let some ither chap your station fill,
That's needy, waiting for a hearty meal.
Weel ye could live in sweet content and rest,
Beside your spouse and smiling babies blest,
On your estate, but lately far increased. *
See how the auspicious, richly, prosperous year
Comes fraught wi' guid potatoes, corn, an' bere;
Cheese, butter; honey sweet, an ample store
To pass the approaching stormy winter o'er.
An' though our beef wi' English may not vie,
Our fields produce some flocks o' special kye.
In short, each object prospers which conspires
To please, or satisfy, our vast desires.
This prospect fair should your attention claim.
And still incline you to remain at hame,
Not to exist in poor inglorious ease,
Like those whose only aim is self to please;
But in an active sphere, a useful man,
Improving every public rural plan.
That knowledge, by extensive travel gain'd,
Would be conducive to a noble end;
Would still direct the workman's care and toil,
How to improve and fertilise the soil.
While your dependants daily would be seen,
Consulting you their patron and their frien'—
Wha learns them how to gain, and use their gear—
Preserve their health, and everything that's dear.
While fo'ks around the prosperous state would see,
Would look, would imitate, and likewise happy be.

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* The beautiful and valuable estate of Hessilhead, with its old castle, and large majestic trees, was purchased about this period (1807) from Maurice Carmichael, Esq., of East End, near Lanark.

LETTER TO W. C., Gardener at Caldwell, 1805.

Now Sol wi' influence benign,
Mak's vegetation freshly spring,
The feathered tribe o' ilka wing,
Their notes are chantin,
The Cookoo's voice does blythely ring
In ilka plantin'.

But Sir, as we are no acquaint,
Ye'll think o' manners I am scant,
Perhaps 'tis true—I hope ye'll grant
It's nae great crime
For me to tell you what I want
In simple rhyme.

I've heard frae fo'k your warks that saw,—
Whan fields are clad wi' frost an' sna',
An' Boreas o'er the wreaths does blaw,
Baith keen an' smart,
Yet ye mak' plants to flourish braw,
By your nice art.

When Phœbus' vital warmth we've lost,
An' nature bound up wi' the frost,
Imported plants frae India's coast—
That torrid clime,
Wi' you in spite o' Boreas' host,
They flourish prime.

I in an auld record hae read,
That yours is the most ancient trade ;
For when auld Adam first was made,
He was accordin',
Placed in fair Eden, wi' his spade
To dress that garden.

But soon he fell into disgrace,
An' was expell'd frae that fine place;
Even he, an' a' his numerous race,
Without remead,
An' doomed to work, wi' sweatin' face,
For claise an' bread.

Some gang at ease, some are oppress't
Ae class o' fo'k toils for the rest:
Man's life's but trouble at the best,
That ne'er does cease,
Till he creep in his clayie nest
Then he gets peace.

Some fo'k are glad an' ithers greetin',
Some honest, ithers live by cheatin',
An' some are always vex'd an' sweatin',
An' toil'd like slaves,
To get their ain gabs keepit eatin'
An' a' the lave's.

This lang depression pray forgie,
'Tis what I want—I'd like to be
Alang to crack wi' you a wee,
Some afternoon,
An' a' your curious warks to see,
Afore we've doon.

To learn how ye the soil prepare,
For rearing plants o' virtue rare:
My roving muse does now declare,
It's time to seal;
Sae I at present add nae mair,
But fare-you-weel.

A. A.

LETTER TO MISS PATRICK, TREARNE, MAY, 1805.

MADAM,

Wi' joy I hae heard you are safely returned—
As one for your welfare sincerely concerned,
I thought, cou'd I find ought o' suitable matter,
To sen' you aince mair, a bit scrawl o' a letter;
An' though I thereby do my weakness reveal,
Ye'll excuse me, because I was meanin' nae ill.
For your knowledge o' things is mair clear an' extensive,
Than those, wha retired, do live gloomy an' pensive;
Or like mony a ane, as an honest man says,
Wha are scarce frae the well or peat-stack a' their days,
Whase min's, like their bodies, are living at home,
An' at large through the universe never did roam:
Not conversant in books, or in ony sic studies,
Yet, perhaps, honest, carefu', an' weel meanin' bodies—
The supporters o' kirkmen, the pillars of state,
By their labour they live, independant of fate,
For its plain, still, the ancient remark is aye true,
That man only lives by the sweat o' his brow;
Some, its true, are of high, some of humble condition,
Yet all are supported by some occupation.
And while many do naething but trifles pursue,
There's nae man but has some dear object in view;
Some riches, some honours, some delicate feedin',
Some drink, some grand dwellings, an' elegant cleedin',
But, *ad infinitum* 'twad be to go through,
While the seekers for wisdom and knowledge are few.
No doubt many wish to be knowing an' wise,
But the means to attain this they mock and despise;
Aft the weakest o' people think maist o' themsel',
An' think they for knowledge all others excell.

But its seldom that ought pleases fo'k a' thegither,
What pleases ae man, aft displeases anither:
The lover, weel-pleased, by his mistress sits,
The miser rejoiced when the coppers he gets,
The vintner is glad his wee stoupie to fill,
The tippler sits smilin' beside the wee gill;
The bookish man's happy perusing his pages,
The workman much so, in receiving his wages:
Joy clears up the face o' an hungry glutton,
While absorbing a lump o' guid fat roasted mutton.
Wi' pleasure the farmer surveys his large fiel's
O' corn an' potatoes, an' rich carrot dreels.
Earth is the store-house from which bounteous nature,
Provides meat an' cleeding for every creature;
And when tossed to an' fro, of sad fortune the sport,
'Tis a safe place of rest to which all men resort.
Some marvel at events, but this naething strange is,
To see each new day bringing forth some new changes—
And in things thus resolving, there must be, of course,
Things changed to the better, and some to the worse;
But when fo'k are aye striving to do for the best,
A superior Guide will tak' care o' the rest;
And when schemes weel contrived prove abortive and vain,
Why there's nae help for death but just marry again.
Yes, Madame, there's something in marriage enchanting—
Fo'k ance having marrows don't gree wi' lang wanting.
'Tis an order most ancient, by Heaven designed,
For the mutual support and increase of mankind;
But cutting this short, to avoid a' reflections,
May ye always be happy in a' your connections;
May the Doctor, likewise, an' his new chosen fair,
Live a long live in love—a happy blessed pair,
Aye sharing most amply of solid pure joys,
Of riches and honours, fine girls and boys—
In the service o' king and o' kintra industrious—
Already promoted to honours illustrious.

Thus through dangers the brave man to honour emerges,
While envy and malice always prove their own scourges;
O may honesty more and more come in repute,
And justice, wi' speed, find base villany out;
But I'll not insist, when an end will be fitter—
In the words of another more public writer:
"May every desire of your heart be propitious,
Be lasting success the result of your wishes,
Unimpaired be your joys, your life happy and long,
And here is an end to my sermon or song."

A. AITKEN.

OVERTON.

CRAWFORD O' THE HA'.

Aft frae origin obscure great guid men hae arisen;
(For genius needs little instruction ava,)
I cou'd write a lang list o' sic chaps an' their doings,
But I'll just gie ae sample in Crawford o' the Ha.'

I kent him whan, just at the school, a wee callan,
Learning questions and psalms, playing bools an' gowtba';
But wha wad hae thought that the wee tricky urchin
Wad hae turn'd out a genius like Crawford o' the Ha'.

He was aye fond o' wood-making—first he made totums,
Win' mills, boats, an' wheels for the wee burns to ca';
An' neist a' kin's o' farming an' household utensils,
At last he's turned wood merchant up at the Ha'.

Now he's book learned an' weel versed in practical science—
Arts pleasing an' usefu' mae than ane, or yet twa;
Or he'll write you a sang, or a tale, true or fiction—
An' the puir poet's patron is Crawford o' the Ha',

Gie him coal, a big pat, an' a wee sip o' water,
He cou'd nearly o'erturn the deep-based Caldwell-law,
But this force he reserves for a mair wise like purpose—
As ye'll see in his wood-cutting warks at the Ha'.

There the silent, untiring, an' powerfu' steam engine
Propels monie a big an' wee sharp circular saw—
Cleavin' logs o' a' sorts into beams, planks, an' rafters,
To suit the vast customers o' Crawford o' the Ha'.

Do ye want a toun built, or a railway push'd forward?
Let him ken, he'll hae four or sax carts in a raw,
At the spot, by neist morning, wi' tons o' tough timber—
Ye'll be weel ser'd (for cash tho') by Crawford o' the Ha'.

Aft the puir man's wee fire frae his woodyard is beetet,
When winter blaws snell through the chinks o' the wa'—
By his warkmen he's liked, by the public respected;
For enemies o' nae sort has Crawford o' the Ha'.

His castle's wall'd roun', an' it's garrison'd stoutly;
For the cork frae the fu' charged black bottle he'll draw,
An wi' volleys o' barleycorn shot he'll assail you,
Till ye cry for an armistice wi' Crawford o' the Ha'.

He has widower been, but might soon woo a helpmate,
Young, prudent, guid-natured, learn'd, wealthy, an' braw;
An', O my fair frien's, ye might deem your fate happy,
Wi' sic a nice dounsit, an' Crawford o' the Ha'.

To instruct his young daughters, his pride an' his pleasure—
May they ne'er gie his bosom a grief nor a thraw—
And in due time find lovers an' husbands far better,
If better there be, than their daddy o' the Ha'.

While green grass adorns the domains o' Caldwell;
While its woods shelter gie to the black gorbie craw;
While the streamlet Crossburn joins the drumlie Dusk water,
Mang Scotsmen far famed will be Crawford o' the Ha'.

OVERTON.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

Did ye e'er pass through the village at the east side o' the gate,
Whar busy labour plys his tools, wi' skill, baith soon an' late?
There the auld black smiddy stan's, by the public kenn'd fu' weel,
Where the blacksmith, at his forge, works the iron an' the steel.

Lang he has usefu' been, for full forty winters past,
We hae heard his hammer's clang, an' the bellows' powerfu' blast;
And aft, to warm us at his fires, up on the hearth we'd speel,
To sing an' crack, an' see him shape the stubborn iron and steel.

Do ye want your pony shod, an' your cart or gig repaired,
A shool to fill your coals, or a spade to delve your yard—
A pitchfork, grape, or claut, or a barrow wi' a wheel?
Here ye'll be served, an' thankfully, wi' trusty iron an' steel.

Picks, wedges, hammers, boring rods for loosening rugged rocks,
Cranes, levers, pulleys, powerfu' screws for lifting ponderous blocks;
An' muckle knives for cutting gurth, ham, bacon, cheese, or veal,
Weel-tempered by the blacksmith, o' the best iron an' steel.

But coals are scarce an' dear, an' the price o' victuals high,
An' his income scant enough to ensure a rich supply;
He's sair toiled, lean an' bare, an' his fare is milk an' meal,
But few e'er fat or rich become by hammering iron an' steel.

Of a' the precious metals iron is most usefu' far,
In the numerous peacefu' arts, and the terrible art of war;
And, first, o' a' mechanics, I will nominate the chiel
Wha, 'midst noise, an' fire, an' smoke, shapes the burning
iron an' steel.

O we canna want the blacksmith, no' for a single hour;
Of our mighty social engine he is the moving power;
For even the sage enactments of Lord John or Rabbie Peel
Hae whyles to be enforced by clear polished iron an' steel.

Be kin' to the auld blacksmith, for his is gey sair wark,
An' gie him aft a waught o' yill to cool the quenchless spark;
For should the bellows cease to blaw, the loss we a' wad feel:
O we cou'dna work ava wanting tools o' iron an' steel.

In a' your undertakings be his calling not forgot,
But stir the coals, an' wisely strike the iron while it's hot;
And passing time, frae year to year, memorials will reveal,
More glorious and enduring than the tempered iron and steel.

"Iron has been called the source of Glory, for it equips the soldier with his sword; of Plenty, for it supplies the husbandman with his ploughshare and reaping hook; of Commerce, for it furnishes the mariner with his compass." "A smith is the basis of civilisation. The iron trade supports every other trade. It provides tools and instruments for universal industry, it is, therefore, the basis of the pyramid, and represents the universal, or the people. The blacksmith's motto is 'By hammer and hand all arts do stand.' The founder of the Church himself, was a smith, not a carpenter, as is generally supposed—but *faber*, a smith; for, as Justin the martyr says, 'He made ploughs and yokes'; and Hilarius says of him, *ferrum igne vincentis* (subduing iron with fire). In the old English Bibles, Joseph the Carpenter, is called Joseph the Smith."

A PARAPHRASE,

ON THE FIRST PSALM,

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY VERSES, EXHIBITING SOME OF THE EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF DRUNKENNESS, &c.

"That man hath perfect wretchedness,
Who works not at his trade,
But spends his time in idleness,
And lies lang in his bed.

"Who wastes the first half o' the week,
In foolish, idle play—
Works like a slave, the ither half,
And drinks the Sabbath-day.

"He shall be like a scroggie tree,
Upon a barren knowe,
Which may, at times, show buds and leaves,
But fruit doth never grow."

"And all he doth shall adverse prove,
Remorse his mind shall fill;
For happiness he ne'er enjoys,
Except out o'er a gill.

"Glass after glass he madly drinks,
His craving to allay,
Till haggard eyes and shrivell'd cheeks,
Show premature decay.

"For why, the temperate living man
Doth life and health retain,
While in the drunken ne'er-do-weel
No soundness doth remain."

Reduced by palsy, dropsy, now
On sorry bed he lies;
Yet, midst his poverty and pain,
For whisky loud he cries.

His wife, while carrying gills, has learn'd
To sip the penny glass:
Anon, another bairn comes hame,
Which adds to the distress.

Their duds o' claise, an' chattels few,
Are lodged in the pawn;
And, but for neighbours kind, they must
Hae perished quite aff han'.

He dies unmourned, the grave conceals
His guid deeds and his ill;
But chalked on the ale house door
Is mony an unpaid gill.

His hungry ragged children beg
For bawbees, bread, and meal;
And learn, by ill example shown,
To drink, cheat, lie, and steal.

May He, who is the orphan's help,
And lonely widow's stay,
Protect the erring, and reclaim
Those who have gone astray.

And, O ye untaught foolish youths,
With pleasures false in view,
Be wise, avoid the fatal snare—
I'll tell you what to do.

When you've got *penny pieces three*,
And for *blue ruin* run—
Instead, gang to the baker's shop,
And buy a muckle bun.

And whether coins be flush or scarce —
Food, clothing, cheap or dear,
Stick by this rule, and naething buy,
But what will eat or wear.

So shall you pass your days afar
From noise and brutal strife;
And drink the waters *pure* and *free*,
That spring to endless life.

NOTE.—The first three verses of the above piece were composed by a coal-hewer about New Cumnock; and the next three by W. Burns of Nettlehurst.—A. A

LINES

ON HEARING THE NEW BELL ON THE PARISH CHURCH IN BEITH, TOLLED THE FIRST TIME, 1810.

"Man flies from time, and time from man too soon,
In sad divorce this double flight must end."

What voice is this that meets my wondering ear?
A voice I ne'er was wont before to hear,
With solemn, serious, clear impressive tone.
Proclaiming loud—another day is gone.
'Tis from the bell suspended in the tower
O'erlooking Beith, to mark each passing hour
Of Time's swift progress, and, with varied sounds,
A monitor to all the neighbouring towns.

Long may thou sound, and sway thy powerfu' voice,
Be still to us the voice of joy and peace;
Aye sound unstained with bloody war's alarms,
Nor tell of fires or other public harms,
Yet bid the people wisely to prepare—
Such things may happen, for they sometimes *were*.

Sweet is thy voice unto the man of toil,
Who breaks the rocks, or digs the stubborn soil,
When thou at evening says the day is done,
His work suspended, and his wages won,
He hameward turns, with wife and babes to share
The well-earned, healthy, homely frugal fare.
To Him whose bounty all their wants supplies
The strain of pure unfeigned thanks doth rise—
Ambition tortures not his tranquil breast,
While kings are restless, pleasant is his rest.
Ye great, this man don't with indifference view.
He labours hard, both for himself and you.

At morning's dawn, at the still close of eve,
Thy gladsome voice to all doth pleasure give,
And chiefly on the weekly sabbath day—
The day of rest to those in wisdom's way.
Warned by thy summons to the house of God,
They meet with joy within the blessed abode,
To praise His Name who doth preserve them still,
And ransoms them from death and every ill.
And from their reverend pastor's mouth to hear
The words of Truth on an obedient ear.
And O ye preachers watch your flocks with care,
And in due season, food for them prepare.
Reprove the scorner, tell his duty too,
Nor spare the rod where chastisement is due.
Inform the simple, soothe the troubled breast,
Abash the proud, cheer up the sore depressed—
By precept and example wisely show
The path to Heaven above from earth below.

When loud the bell proclaims the tale of grief,
Or sounds the triumphs of the warlike chief—
Warns to the house where wisdom's voice doth call,
Or to the tomb to see the end of all.
Wakes labour's sons when shines the orient ray,
Or calls the weary home at parting day—
All you that hear, attend with deep concern,
It preaches truths, which all men ought to learn.
(Truths, which the Grecian warner once did bear
From morn to morn, to old King Philips' ear,
To mind him he was mortal, nor incline
Pride to suggest, his nature was divine).
Each stroke proclaims thy former days are past,
And every present hour *may* be thy last.
Much truth to learn, much work thou hast to do—
Work for thyself, and work for others too;
And far thou art from home—work hard and run,
Lest night o'ertake thee ere thy work be done.

BEAUTIES OF WOODSIDE.

Some like swift excursions on steamboats,
Others like upon chariots to ride;
I prefer a lone walk near the gloaming,
'Mang the green spreading trees at Woodside.

There the eye and mind freely survey,
The landscape both varied and wide,
Undisturb'd by the din of the village,
'Mid the plantings and parks at Woodside.

The Mansion is lofty and ancient,
Where men of renown did reside,
And the wine, and the dance, and the music,
Have gladden'd the hall at Woodside.

No warrior in arms brightly burnished,
Now stalks forth the fight to decide;
But combin'd female sweetness and beauty—
Win the eye and the heart at Woodside.

How happy's the man here admitted,
To woo him a willing sweet bride;
And exchange loves soft tales in the arbour,
Rear'd by fair female hands at Woodside.

The youth, knowing, honest and gen'rous,
And free from presumption and pride:
May here find a match for his calling,
For there's rich choice and wale at Woodside.

May the steps of the cunning deceiver,
Far hence aye be turned aside,—
Nor the hand of the ruthless marauder
Invade this retreat at Woodside.

Through the length and the breadth of the country,
From the water of Ayr to the Clyde;
You may search day and night till you're weary,
Ere you find a snug place like Woodside.

O, cold is the blast on the uplands,
While the snow on Benlomond does bide,
But the snow and the tempest are waste,
Long ere they approach the Woodside.

Let the sons of ambition, like bubbles,
Float high upon fortune's full tide;
I'd contemplate their brief rise and downfall,
In this rural retreat at Woodside.

Till life's latest hour my petition,
To the Power that for all doth provide,
Will be, not for honours and riches,
But a home, a sweet home like Woodside.

For though I were king of the Empire,
With thousands to spend and divide;
I would find both a queen and a palace,
And rule my domains at Woodside.

A. A.

A MASON SONG.

(Written for a St. John's-Day Meeting.)

TUNE—*Jockey, the Plough-boy.*

On this long wished for night we are met in grand style,
As aft has been done in our famed Scottish isle,
The blessings of plenty and freedom to share,
And walk by the rules of the compass and square.

While many in quest of false happiness roam,
Of strife and contention divested we come,
Ourselves to enjoy, without trouble or care,
In the straight pathway mark'd with the compass and square.

Let misers, with fondness, count over their store,
Let pride and ambition triumphantly soar;
For though war, the red fiend, o'er the nations does rair,
In peace we will walk by the compass and square.

In the bonds of true friendship we meet to pursue
The interest of all with hearts honest and true;
In companionship mutual, that virtue most rare,
We walk by the rules of the compass and square.

Our works, like our friendship, triumphantly stand
The pride and the glory of every known land,—
Of the works of proud science, what trophies are there,
Like those that we rear with the compass and square.

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What are lands or possessions of silver and gold,
Without friendly dwellings to screen from the cold?
And who but true masons such homes can prepare,
By means of their art, and the compass and square.

From the page of true hist'ry it plainly is seen,
That kings and wise prophets freemasons have been,
And nobles, and men with their heads full of lair,
Have deemed it an honour to handle the square.

O'er the world, as brothers, in concord we live,
For one cannot want while another can give,
Esteemed by the great, and caressed by the fair,—
We live by the rules of the compass and square.

The great Architect, who the worlds did frame,
Instructed our sires in the great building scheme;
In the art thus acquired we will aye persevere,
And work by the rules of the compass and square.

Here's a health to true masons wherever they be,
May others soon learn to be happy as we;
And the time soon arrive when all mankind shall dare,
To perfect their plans with the compass and square.

BORLAND'S YILL.

Much has been said in praise o' wine,
An' liquor strang, o' every kin',
O' porter broun, o' water, syne,
Frae spring or rill;
To drink an' sing, is my design,
O' Borland's yill.

I've drucken drink o' mony a sort,
Frae penny-wheep, to richest port,—
At Inns, whar tipplers aft resort,
To tak' their gill:
Nane better pleas'd nor did less hurt
Than Borland's yill.

Langsyne, our fathers, on sic cheer,
Were strang an' supple, hail an' feir,
Devout, kind, knowing, plain, sincere,
Sworn faes to ill:
Sic blessings, yet, we a' might share
On Borland's yill.

Some fo'k when troubled wi' life's faught,
Aff to the whisky house gang straight,
An' drink ha'f-mutchkins sax or aucht,
Their cares to kill:
They'd better gaen an' taen a waught
O' Borland's yill.

Drams waste our means, when freely drucken,
Excite mair thirst, but dinna slocken;
We drink—we sleep, but when we wauken,
We're thirsty still:
My frien's; sic evils cou'dna happen
On Borland's yill.

Ye wha wad rise up wi' the lark,
An' lang preserve life's vital spark;
Ye wha wad gang about your wark
Wi' pith an' skill;
Drink moderate drams, your safety mark
Is Borland's yill.

Ye preachers learned, whase labours tend,
Men's minds an' morals to amend,
An' guide them to a happy end,
Straight up the hill,
Ye may do waur than recommend
John Borland's yill.

Ye doctors, wha mak' health your care,
Lay bye your drugs, an' blisters sair,
Nor draw your lancet ony mair,
Fo'k's bluid to spill:
Just bid them drink, an' dinna spare
John Borland's yill.

Ye lawyers keen, prolong the fray,
An' ponderous burdens on men lay:
Yes—mak' the maist o't while ye may,
Your purse to fill:
Your job is done, whanever they
Drink Borland's yill.

Ye wha, on Sunday, at the skail,
The lasses treat wi' buns and ale;
Aye use them weel, nor fear to swell
The vintner's bill:
Ye're safe, as lang's ye weet your meal,
Wi' Borland's yill.

An' whan cauld winter is our lot,
Ye'll in the black-pan get it hot;
Wi' sugar sweet, an' spice, what not—
An' bakes, at will:
This is the way to spen' your groat
On Borland's yill.

In Will's, wha lives at the Close-head,
Or Wyllie's, a' the blackguards dread—
Bogfauld's, or Stinston's,* there wi' speed,
Your wish fulfil:
Ye'll ken't! for clear, rich, mild, as mead,
Is Borland's yill.

In Beith New-street, whar John was born,
Ye'll fin' him brewing e'en an' morn,
Frae real, true John Barleycorn
Crush'd in the mill,—
Whar ye'll get casks, pints, or a horn
O' Borland's yill.

It's guid for fo'k in every stage;
It fills the foolish, cheers the sage:
It hauds the heart o' feeble age,
Whase bluid rins chill:
In short—we could write mony a page
On Borland's yill.

A. A.

Beith, *19th November, 1828.*

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* Four Public-houses in Beith. I do not mean that this celebrated ale is exclusively obtained in these houses; far less would I insinuate that they are the only respectable houses in town. The truth is this—I had neither time nor room to work up the names of so many landlords, and whisky-houses into my humble verses.

As for John Borland himself, after having tried the trades of Grocer and Spirit-dealer, Brewer of Ale and Porter, Selling Cloth, &c., and not having succeeded according to his wishing in either,—he emigrated about 1842, with his family, to the far-west of America.

GUID OAT MEAL.

A Letter from John Fulton, in reply to Borland's Yill.

Sir,

With knowing deep poetic skill,
Ye sing the praise o' Borland's Yill,
Cou'd I but climb Parnassus hill
But ha'f as weel,
A page or twa I now would fill
On guid oat meal.

Sma' yill is but a feckless trash,
No worth our praise nor yet our cash;
Wives mak' as guid drink frae mallash,
Which ser's as weel
To quaff, or syne doun suet hash,
Mix'd up wi' meal.

Whisky an' yill may gar us clatter,
And aften stupid nonsense chatter,
Or on the wa's discharge our water,
An' staggerin' reel;
But canna mak' us strong or fatter,
Like guid oat meal.

Would your fam'd yill, if aught did ail,
E'er bring relief or mak' us hale?
I doubt its boasted powers wad fail,
An' that we'd feel:
Nor wad it serve us for a meal,
Like guid oat meal.

I would ae question here propose,
To such and those alone who knows,
Did we a full cask decompose,
It would reveal
Mair strength was in a pint o' brose,
O' guid oat meal.

It wad appear baith weak an' stupit,
For a divine, whan in the pu'pit,
Sma' yill to praise, till hoarse an' rupit,
Wi' haly zeal,
Whose worth can never be reputit,
Like guid oat meal.

Oat meal's the very staff o' life,
It mak's our comforts great an' rife;
It banishes domestic strife,
Frae every biel:
Nought pleases husband, weans or wife,
Like routh o' meal.

Tho' we were tottering on a crummock,
Nae better stuff cou'd fill our stummock,
Whan newly started frae our hummock,
An' hungry feel,—
Than just a weel kned butter'd bunnock,
O' guid oat meal.

Or what would children mair encourage,
To learn their questions on the *carritch*
Or when for bread they slyly forage,
An' rive an' steel,—
Than just a smoking cog o' porrage,
O' guid oat meal.

Should vile lumbago ever rack
The silver cord that binds our back,
An' days an' weeks our labours slack,
We'd soon be weel,
If night and morning porrage tak',
O' guid oat meal.

Or should a burning fever seize us,
Or headache that hard drenching gie's us,
Nae medicine can better ease us,
We often feel,—
Than fine warm gruel boil'd to please us,
O' guid oat meal.

Guid wheaten bread does weel enough,
Potatoes too, are noble stuff.
But that which mak's our dwallings rough,
An' ilka chiel
Mak's healthy, sturdy, strong and teugh,
Is guid oat meal.

Some brag o' mutton, some o' beef,
(Though we get little, to our grief,)
An' ither some pretend their chief
Delight is veal;
But poor fo'k's only great relief,
Is guid oat meal.

O Scotia may thou lang maintain,
Thy character without a stain;
And may mild late and early rain,
Bless every fiel',
An' mak' baith young an' auld fo'k fain,
Wi' routh o' meal.

BEITH, *25th November, 1828.*

LETTER TO WILLIAM SWAN.

Now Willie lad, ye ken that we
Hae lang been thick, and hope to be
Frien's yet, though seldom ither see,
Sae I expect
Ye'll no resent, but pardon me
This lang neglect.

The auld remark whyles true we find,
"Fo'k out o' sight are out o' mind,"
This, 'mang fo'k fickle as the wind,
May be the case,
But whar true friendship's fetters bind
Can ne'er tak' place.

Now though I ken your feelin's nice,
Ye'll no refuse a guid advice;
'Tis needit, baith wi' daft an wise,
For aft we see
"The best laid schemes o' men an' mice,
Gang aft aglee."

While youth an' strength are on your side,
These transient blessings don't divide
On follies, but while bees provide
Their winter's store,
Remember eilds dark e'ening tide
When youth is o'er.

O Willie, youthfu' days are bonny,
Like May-day morning, clear an' sunny,
Now is the time for making money,
Wi' thrifty ettle,
E'er winter come, dark, cauld, an' winny,
To try our mettle.

Aye occupy the hours designed
In pursuit o' a usefu' kind,
Nor e'er reflect to store your mind
With truth frae Heaven:
These last, while trifles, with the wind,
Like chaff are driven.

The man that pushes up the hill,
Avoiding every thing that's ill,
Wi' honest aim, he'll prosper still
In a' his ways—
Wi' honour he his place does fill,
An' en's his days.

Now Willie, ye maun pardon me
For singing on sae flat a key;
Ye'll think I might mair lively be,
An' sae do I—
But wi' the theme the muse does gie,
I maun comply.

As prosperous times our spirits rouse,
And disappointments cloud our views;
Sae whyles like ither fo'k, the muse
Is blythe and jolly;
At ither seasons she doth choose
Strains melancholy.

Some are by nature dowf and dull,
An' griev'd an' vex'd against their will,
An' ither some gang cheerfu' still,
Alang the gate—
Come weel come woe, they tak' nought ill
Mark'd out by fate.

When fo'k are young they're free o' care,
Which cleaves to man, sad misery's heir—
While fortune deals her glitterin' ware
Amang the crowd,
Ilk' ane stan's gapin' for a share
O' something good.

But fortune's gifts are strangely varied,
Wi' portions large some are maist worried,
An' ithers, just as guid, are hurried
To get their fill,—
The man that's through a midway carried,
Is happiest still.

Now Willie, as ye're young an' strang,
Sure ye'll be for a wife or lang,
If sae, wale right, for some gae wrang
An' cry, alas!
I hope ye'll let me ken, though thrang,
Ere this tak' place.

O man, an' ye your thoughts disclose,
To me, in either verse or prose,
I'd write you something mair jocose,
Brave honest chiel,—
May ye ne'er want guid stabby brose,
Sae fare you weel.

1805. A. A.

ELEGY ON HUGH LOVE,

BELLMAN AND GRAVE-DIGGER, BEITH, 1805.

"A trusty brother of the trade
Did do for him what he had done for thousands."

While mighty death, wi' conquering sway,
Sweeps men in numbers great away,
The feelin' heart must still give way
To grieve an' mourn,
Whan worthy men sink to the clay,
Ne'er to return.

O Beith deplore, while here I tell,
In weeping strains, how Hughie fell;
Yes, he's nae mair, wha did excell
Some o' the lave:
Few fo'k, like him, cou'd ring a bell,
Or howk a grave.

Let nane think the employment low,
Since rich an' poor, at last, did go
To dwellings in the clay below
That Hughie made;
But now he's join'd the silent Co,—
For O he's dead.

At evil he was never glad,
But when death horrid havoc made
'Mang men, this did advance his trade
In a' its stages:
While sufferers tears of sorrow shed,
He gat the wages.

He said 'twas vain for him to grieve
An' his ain soul o' guid bereave;
For, weel or woe, death will achieve
The fall o' man:
Sae he like ither fo'k did live
Aye till his en'.

But ah! his en' it soon drew on,
Lang, lang he lived, but now he's gone—
Awa ye hearts o' hard whinstone
That dinda feel
Much griev'd, sin' death hath overthrown
Sae guid a chiel,

Whar lang grass o'er the dead did wave,
Nor lettered stanes their names did save,
Weel he cou'd point out ilka grave
Whar toun's fo'k lay,
An' how they did themsel'es behave
In their ain day.

In Hughie's yaird the sair oppress't
An' weary did enjoy quiet rest:
A' sorts o' fo'k, by death doun prest,
Were gathered there,
An' soon they slept in clayie nest
Beneath his care.

Aft wi' his antique spades an' shools,
He dug through rows o' kindred mools,
Whar rich an' poor, wise fo'k an' fools,
Lie strangely jumbled,
At last he drapp'd his sair worn tools,
An' 'mang them tumbled.

While many workmen basely spare
Due pains, if they can get their fare,
He, whan employ'd, wi' honest care,
Be't late or soon,
Did work till he cou'd see nae mair
That cou'd be done.*

But chiefly he did far excell
Maist fo'k at tolling o' the bell,
O' great events he gar'd it tell,
Wi' clinkin' soun',
That a' the kintra heard its knell
Far, far aroun'.

Ye sextons an' ye bellman a',
While ye the tear o' grief let fa',
Your clear-toned bells wi' vigour ca'
The news to spread :
In weepin' strains tell great an' sma'
That Hughie's dead.

An' while ye ring the funeral knell,
Min' ye are mortal men yoursel' ;
Whae'er ye be that do hear tell,
The truth think on,
That some day soon the warning bell
Will say ye're gone.

---

* Alluding to a common expression of his,—after clapping up the grave, and looking significantly at the person from whom he expected his wages, he said, "Noo I see little mair can be done."

Nae mair he'll ope the temple doors,
Where is dispensed the gospel stores
Of medicines that heal the sores
O' mind an' body,
Nae mair he'll sit 'mang jovial cores,
Wha drink rum-toddy.

'Mang men he'll never mair appear,
A' ye wha haud his memory dear,
Ance having shed for him a tear,
Your mournin' cease :
O' life's ills he has gotten clear—
He rests in peace.

A. A.

A VOICE FROM THE AYR DRAPERS.

Ye lieges o' Ayr, we wad rede you remember,
On and after next Monday, 29th o' September,
At seven o'clock p.m., our bus'ness we'll stop,
And we'll steek up the entrance to ilka claith shop.

Gentle ladies! we pray you to bear this in mind,
Whene'er to make purchases you are inclined,
Be it shawl, be it collar, or gaudy new frock,
It canna be had,—if its past seven o'clock.

Ye gents! wha desire new apparel to buy,
Wi' the height o' guidwill a' ye're wants we'll supply,
Wi' coat, waistcoat, trousers, or braw satin stocks,
If to us ye repair—but afore seven o'clock.

Ignoble vulgus! whenever you need
To launch out the siller your bare backs to clead,
Wi' corduroys, moleskins, or guid brown hern smock,
Ye maun e'en draw your purse strings, afore seven o'clock.

The noble, an' gentle, an' semple an' a',
Whether dressed in rough "hame-spun," or satin sae bra',
Remember when seven chimes—click gaes ilk lock,
And we'll see you to-morrow—its past seven o'clock.

And now, in conclusion, we've ae word to you
Wha ne'er come to *buy*, *but just to leuk through*,
Wha ruffle our tempers, an' toozle our stock,
Henceforth let *your* visits be past seven o'clock.

AYR, *September*, *1845*. A COUNTER LOUPER.

A RESPONSE TO "A VOICE FROM THE AYR DRAPERS."

Ye Drapers o' Ayr, ye may shut whan ye please,
For its right to consult your health, profit and an' ease;
Your law thus made known, we'll no seek to revoke,
But remember the final hour—seven o' the clock.

Ye publish in plain terms the close o' the day,
But when ye begin the neist morn do not say;
Though I guess 'twill na' be at the craw o' the cock,
If ye aye loup the counter at seven o' the clock.

I like na' lang hours, but I find we maun wait,
The public to please, whyles baith early and late,
For when ye look roun' ye, ye'll fin' that maist fo'k,
Hae a great deal to do after seven o' the clock.

The farmer maun rise at the dawn, wi' the lark,
An' the gloamin ne'er brings him at an en' to his wark;
The guid priest maun visit the sick o' his flock,
Mony a cauld winter night after seven o' the clock.

The doctor maun gang at a' hours, on express,
An' watch by the bedside o' death and distress;
E'en the puir beggar man, wi' his staff an' meal-pock,
Aft has lodgings to seek lang past seven o' the clock.

Could ye wile in your customers just at your ca';
In a short afternoon ye wad soon ser' them a';
But they'll come when they like though the hour be bespoke,
An' they'll no be a' serv'd yet, at seven o' the clock.

Even when *priggers* or *touslers* come in for to spy
Your guids an' their prices an' no' for to buy,
Ye maun aye speak them fair, though their heads ye cou'd knock,
An' wish them at France, ere seven o' the clock.

For should ye speak out independant an' plain,
To Glasgow they're aff wi' the aught o'clock train;
An' they'll buy claith o' a' sorts, a guid household stock,
An' be hame at auld Ayr, afore seven o' the clock.

Farewell, my guid frien's, whan I get a pound note,
I'll come doun an' buy a guid new winter coat,
An' we'll hae a douse crack, or a queer funny joke,
Wi' a glass o' strong yill, *after* seven o' the clock.

A. A.

Beith, *12th October, 1845.*

ELEGY

ON "TIGER," THE HOUSE-DOG AT TREARNE,

WHICH DIED ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY MORNING, 1832.

"Dogs are honest creatures,
I am a friend to dogs."

Auld thirty-ane had run his race,
An' thirty-twa had ta'en his place,
That morn disclosed a mournfu' case,
Which pains my head;
I saw the tryin' scene—Alas!
Puir Tiger's dead.

On Hogmanay, nae farther gane,
His bed, as wont, the warm hearthstane,
Nor sought his cog, or marrowy bane.
Or crust o' bread;
And e'er morn cam', but why mak' mane?
For Tiger's dead.

He, at his prime, was big an' stark,
An' weel cou'd work his master's wark,
The midnight robber, frae his bark,
His fate might read:
He stood his grun', be't light or dark—
But now he's dead.

At randie beggars fierce he barket— *
Packmen an' tinklers weel he market;
Nae gangril trashrie near him larket,
But fled wi' speed,
Their swindling tricks he aye play'd turk at—
Now, O he's dead.

When nibor callants errands went,
Or farmers gaun to pay their rent,
To decent fo'k he aye was kent
As mild as mead:
To Peggy † lang his aid he lent—
But Tiger's dead.

Though aft wi' him she rag'd and flate,
And said he aye stood in her gate,
She gied him mony a creeshy plate
To staunch his greed;
They were guid frien's baith soon an' late,
But now he's dead.

---

* Linneus has made it a characteristic of dogs "that they bark at beggars," but beggars are ragged, and sometimes have that look of idleness which poverty produces; and then the imagination of the dog sees in the poor mendicant, a robber of his master's house, or one who will be cruel to himself, and he expresses his own fears by a bark. A dog is thus valuable for watching property in proportion to the ease with which he is alarmed. One of the greatest terrors of a domesticated dog is a naked man, because this is an unaccustomed object. The sense of fear is said to be so great in this situation, that the fiercest dog will not even bark. A Tanyard at Kilmarnock was a few years ago extensively robbed by a thief who took this method to overcome the courage of a powerful Newfoundland dog who had long protected the property. The terror which the dog felt at the naked thief was wholly imaginary, for the naked man was less capable of resisting the dog than if he had been clothed.

† Dr. Patrick's cook.

Nae mastiff, collie, terrier, cur,
Durst breed wi' him the least demur,
Nor geese, nor bubbly Jock durst stir,
They much did dread
He wad hae trod them in a furr—
But O he's dead.

Unlike the spanky gray-houn' race,
That follow Parker * in the chase,
His legs were posts, his body-case
Was laigh an' braid,
Wi' lang black hair, an' lion-face—
But Tiger's dead.

When ladies braw did walk at e'en
Doun by "the place" 'mang plantings green,
Whyles first, whyles hin-most, he was seen,
Their guard an' guide;
They've tint a powerfu' honest frien',
For Tiger's dead.

Weel he cou'd lick milk wi' the cat,
Or lift the lid o' the kail-pat; †
He had mair skill, I'll tell you what,
In time o' need.
Than mony a *thing* that wears a hat—
But now he's dead.

---

* Dr. Patrick's Gamekeeper.

† For some time previous to his death, he had learned the practice of removing the covers from the pots and other kitchen utensils, and helping himself to whatever food he could find.

Life's devious path while we are treadin';
Things greatly change while we're no heedin'—
Tiger grew auld, dee't, as I've said, an'
To fill his stead
Anither daft young whelp they're breedin'—
But Tiger's dead.

His master's mansion lang he guardit,
For danger he ne'er ken'd nor car'd it,
Nor, at the last, was he discardit
When past remead;
May merit aye be thus rewardit,
Alive or dead.

Peace to his banes—'tis nature's law
That men, as weel as dogs, maun fa';
Disease, with breath, malign, does blaw,
An' snaps life's thread,
Or auld age comes, an' we're awa—
For Tiger's dead.

But may we live, through help o' grace,
That whan we dee, they'll say, alas!
We've lost in him, hard is our case,
A frien' indeed,
Whase deeds fond memory lang shall trace,
When we are dead.

LETTER TO ROBERT ANDERSON,

SON OF THE REV. JAMES ANDERSON, RELIEF CHURCH, BEITH, A LITTLE BOY WHO HAD KINDLY LENT THE AUTHOR A SMALL OIL LAMP, ONE DARK STORMY EVENING, DEC., 1826.

Thy little lamp, supplied with oil,
Did light me safely home
Through dark and wet, for all the while
I screen'd it from the storm.

I pitied the lone traveller; far
Involved in darksome night,
'Mong trackless wilds, no friendly star,
Or lamp to give him light.

Light, whither from Heaven thou brightly shine,
Or from the oil-lamp flow,
Thy cheering influence benign,
Gives life to all below.

What were our world, were light not given?
A cold and dismal place;
And, wanting Truth revealed from Heaven,
What were the human race?

Led by this light, the paths we shun
Which to destruction tend;
And strive the Heavenly prize to win—
Rich, lasting, without end.

O may this light shine everywhere
Where dwells the human race;
And moral darkness, guilt, despair,
Retire before its face.

While erring mortals onward move
In danger, crime, distress,
Aye will this light a beacon prove,
And many guide to bliss.

Farewell dear boy, and may thy youth
Religious ways engage,
And sage experience, wisdom, truth,
Light up thy riper age.

And may thy light before men shine, *
That those who see thy ways
May imitate thee, and incline
To render God the praise.

When watery vapours, pouring doun,
Obscure the star-light dim,
May I, when late and dark, in toun,
Yet find thy lamp in trim.

A. AITKEN.

---

* *Vide* Matthew v 16.

VERSES TO CLEGS.

What ails ye now, ye stupit things,
Sae furiously to drive your stings,
To pierce the hidden, bloody springs
That's in a body;
May some mischief clip aff your wings,
Ye tyrants bloody.

Tho' aft repell'd, ye'll no desist—
Sure its bad manners, at the least,
On rich and poor alike to feast
Aye whan ye will;
Wi' equal force, in man and beast,
Ye stap your bill.

Its strange to see your feeble race
Play dart upo' a strong man's face,
As fierce as ye war full in case
To gar him yeild,
Though aft ye fa' wi' much disgrace
Upo' the field.

Unto your pith ye lead the van
O' enemies, baith to beast an' man;
Even you an' a' that countless clan
O' flies an' midges;
Ye aften gar us flyte an' ban,
A gie vile fidges.

When fleas, an' scabs, an' lice, did join
To plague the fo'k o' Ham langsyne,
Ye wad be there, we may opine,
Amang the squad,
To put themsel's, their kye and swine
A' starting mad.

In simmer, whan it's warm an' dry,
An' Phœbus shinin' bright an' high,
Ye aft gar horses, sheep, an' keep
Tak' mad-like dances,
An' to the shades an' houses fly
Through a' the fences.

Then turnips, 'tatoes, beans, an' pease,
Hay, plantings o' young thriving trees,
Kail, sybos, leeks, an' hives o' bees,
Are laid in ruins;
A' this, wi' grief, the farmer sees
An' bans your doings.

To shun you, through the thorns they'll rin,
Or plunge o'er rig, back in the lin—
Vile trash! ye reckon it nae sin
The brutes to torture,
Ye should be grippet every skin
An' wrought like mortar.

But, 'mang life's ills on us ye're sent,
Soon will your feeble rage be spent,
Your term o' life, like ours, is kent
To be but short;
Brown Autumn's breeze will soon prevent
Your vexin' sport.

Oppressers, sprung o' nobler race,
Wha suck the comfort an' the peace
Of honest worth, behold your case
Ye living plagues!
Wretched, unpitied too, alas!
Ye'll fa' like clegs.

LINES

ADDRESSED TO MRS. C. SMITH, IN PORT GLASGOW,
(FORMERLY MRS. LOVE, OF BORDER,)
ON HER MARRIAGE.

MADAM,
In honest auld ploughman style I wish ye guid fuirder,
Though I maun say that ye're very muckle missed at the Border;
For mony are the times that I hae gotten my dordor *
When I cam' to ta'k wi' you at the Border,
I was feared ye had been seized wi' some mental disorder
Whan I heard about your marriage an' hasty flight frae the Border,
For ye might hae gotten a husband, or ought that ye liket to order,
About Beith or elsewhere, without ever leaving the Border.
Seek Ayrshire through an' through, or even a guid piece farder,
Ye'll scarce fin' as nice a canny spot as the Border.
While memory, aye faithfu', continues to be a recorder
Ye'll never cease, I opine, to remember the Border,
An' compassionate mony a poor factory weaver an' carder,
Wha ne'er got leave to breathe the pure breeze at the Border.
Remote frae the spendthrifts haunts, or the keen money hoarder,
Ye cou'd hae lived economically, safe, an' weel at the Border.
For the tumult o' the nations, and the sanguinary sworder
Ne'er raise their astounding voice, or show their front at the Border;

* *Dordor*, or *dorder-meat*, a repast taken by our forefathers between the dinner and supper meals, serving the same end as the modern practice of taking tea. This repast, consisting of bread, boiled colewort, &c., was carried unto the field to the herd boys, one of which was kept on every farm. One of these boys on the farm of Barr, Parish of Beith, with whom my father was intimate, on surveying his scrimped allowance, exclaimed—"Ither herds get a *dordor* like a *dorder*, but I get a *doug litters dordor*."

But wi' Providence, its true, the guid fo'k's guide an' guarder,
Ye may lieve ony whar, just as weel as at the Border.
But I'm doubtfu' ye'll be sayin' I'm a daft pedantic *worder*,
Wha has 'na muckle to do wi' neither you nor the Border,
An' that I had better be as far awa as Auchterarder,*
Than laugh at man or mother's son belanging to the Border.
I acknowledge this is true, may your fate ne'er be harder
Than it was while ye dwalt about Delap toun or the Border.
May ye always enjoy health, an' plenty o' meat in your larder,
Nor e'er turn a longing look back to the Border.
May your *sailor* steer life's cruise free o' *shoals*, *rocks*, or other retarder,
And lang retain the *prize*, nobly gained at the Border.
May ye hear the meed of "well done," frae man's Sovereign and Rewarder,
On arriving safe, life's voyage o'er, near Heaven's happy Border.
Sae I'll aye remain your frien' wi' lang increasing ardour,
An' whan I come your gate, I'll ca' an' bring news frae the Border.

A. A.

LINES

ON MEETING A CELEBRATED DANCING MASTER ON THE ROAD, ONE SABBATH MORNING, IN A STATE OF EBRIETY.

Can this be him, wha teaches fo'k at once
Wit an' guid manners—learns them, too, to dance?
Who mak's mere dults in knowledge bright excell—
Can he be gaun sae stupid like himsel'?
Yes, wonder not, but view the matter right—
As candles waste while they disperse their light,
Sae he has taught his pupils so much skill,
That he has nane o't left to guide himsel'.

---

* A Town and Parish of Perthshire.

EPITAPH
ON THE LATE DR R. WILSON, BEITH.

When Fame had reported the Doctor was dead,
Every breast was oppress'd with sad sorrow;
And young and old cried, as they scratched their head—
Alas! he has not left his marrow!

For he drank, and he rhym'd, where the merry souls met,
In houses where Rum is retailed;
Arms, shoulders, or legs broke or sprained, he set,
And sore cuts and bruises he healed.

The various diseases were well by him ken't
Which assail both the rich and the needy;
To abate these afflictions a life-time he spent,
And for wages he never was greedy.

Some said he was not sound in his creed;
Others said he was wild in his morals:
But he cares not a pin, whether living or dead,
Which way they determine such quarrels.

The Doctor was alive when these verses were written. On presenting him with a copy, he laughed, and, calling for writing-materials, said he would write my epitaph before leaving the room. However, after musing some time, he started up and said: "It is impossible just now;" and, so far as I know, was never done—yet, he was facile at extempore rhyming—I give one specimen.—James Montgomerie, baker, having been laughing for two or three hours, without intermission—"Stop," said the Doctor, "I'll write your Epitaph.—

'Here lies honest James, a most comical fellow;
During life, many a bicker he quaffed;
He was kind to his friends, whether sober or mellow—
When he died, he groaned not, but laughed.'"

THE HAUDING O' THE PLOUGH.

Of a' the occupations and trades that I do ken
Amang the various nations of civilized men,
In ancient or in modern times, to gie ilk trade its due,
Nae calling is sae usefu' as hauding o' the plough.

Concerning its antiquity the Bible is express—
When Adam in fair Eden was set the flowers to dress,
The old malicious serpent mischief upo' him drew—
He was drave frae the garden and sent to haud the plough.

For many years auld Adam a farmer's life did lead,
And made store of provisions his numerous race to feed,
And when his auld son, Cain, from youth to manhood grew,
His father he succeeded at hauding o' the plough.

In ilka generation some aye pursue the trade—
The guiding o' the ploughshare—that mankind may be fed;
For fo'k o' a' professions, whan they are keepit fu',
Maun own they are supported by hauding o' the plough.

King David was a gude man, as ancient records tell,
King Solomon for wisdom, did a' mankind excell;
And Samson was a strong man amang the warlike crew,
Yet nane o' these great worthies could leeve without the plough.

Though Hector was a brave man, an' lang defended Troy,
And Hercules (its storied), did monsters great destroy,
And famous Alexander did a' the world subdue,
Yet these were a' dependant on hauding o' the plough.

Our nobles, whase possessions extend baith far an' wide—
The lawyers wha, by writing, perplex'd affairs decide—
An' the minister wha preaches up weel what we should do,
Wi' a' their wealth and learning are leeving by the plough.

Our doctors, learned an' skillfu' about the human frame,
Wha gie their patients doses, and former health reclaim,
And a' our great mechanics wi' pulley an' wi' screw,
And a' our curious artists are leeving by the plough.

As far as trade commercial around the globe extends,
Ae man upon anither continually depends:
Ae trade supports anither the world through an' through,
But a' trades are supported by hauding o' the plough.

Then lang may agriculture in a' its branches speed,
That fo'k may weel' be furnished wi' plenty o' gude bread;
For mankind o'er the warl wad sune be weak an' few,
Without life's best supporter—the hauder o' the plough.

ELEGY ON JOHN FLEMING,

WHO LIVED IN BROADSTONE, AND DIED, 1803.

Ye Flemings living far or near,
Wha o' this mournfu' event hear,
Come a' wi' me, an' pass a year
In mourning weed;
Frae ilka e'e let fa' a tear,
For Fleming's dead.

The subject o' this mournfu' theme,
Black Johnny Fleming is the same,
For mony years he had his hame
Near Beith hill-head;
But now he's only left his name,—
For Flemings dead.

He in his youth was strang and braw,
But ne'er had wife nor wean ava,
Sae leftna' neither great nor sma'
To fill his stead;
But left an empty stinking ha',
For Fleming's dead.

A soger, too, he was, I ween, *
Whan Highlandmen in arms were seen
Wi' Charlie in rebellion keen
Against their head;
An' wad hae foughten for his frien',
But now he's dead.

He bought an' selled, I heard fo'k say,
An' swappet cattle mony a day,
He strings o' horses, on the way
To fairs did lead,
Guid, bad, an' worse, white, black, broun, grey,
But Fleming's dead.

* When the rebellion of 1745 broke out, the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon, then minister of Beith, animated a number of the inhabitants, and John Fleming among the rest, to enrol themselves as volunteers in the cause of King George, and to march along with himself to Glasgow, to join the royal forces. But here—from that false confidence which so often becomes pernicious to even the best of causes—they were informed that their services were not required, and were ordered home. The minister, however, continued with the army, and being at the disastrous battle of Falkirk, was there taken prisoner, and confined by the rebels in the castle of Doun, till the result of the battle of Culloden enabled him and others to regain their liberty. He left Paisley in 1768, and went to America, where he was appointed President of the College of Princeton, in New Jersey. There he introduced into their philosophy all the most liberal and modern improvements of Europe; and Learning received an extension before unknown in the American Seminaries. After having been 7 years a representative of the Province of New Jersey, in the Congress of the United States, he died, aged 73 years. His works, in 9 vols., were published at Edinburgh, in 1804.

Lan,' too, he farm'd, an' keepit kye,
Ah' herdit, milket, made the whey ;
He kirning butter aft did try,
An' baking bread ;
An' wash'd his dirty sarks forby—
But O, he's dead.

He wrought his milkners a' himsel',
Aft I hae heard the cadger tell ;
His cheese, tho' somewhat gray an' fell,
Was halesome feed,
A savoury, baith to taste an' smell—
But now he's dead.

He grew right social o'er a gill,
An' liked a waught o' nappy yill ;
O' whisky he drank mony a fill,
Wi' muckle greed ;
Tobacco, too, he liket still—
But Fleming's dead.

Through life he many years did blunder,
Till he was nearly aged a hunder ; *
Sae auld, ye'll scarce fin' for a wonder,
Frae this to Tweed ;
But death, at last, dang a' asunder—
For Fleming 's dead.

'Twas n the year aughteen an' three,
The time arrived for him to dee,
Sae frae the yerth his sawl did flee
On wings o' speed—
A warning, frien's, to you an' me—
For Fleming's dead.

* I heard John say that he attended Largs Fair, or Colmsday, as it is called, for 60 successive years, without intermission.—A. A.

An' whar he gaed, let those relate
Wha pry into the future state;
Like him, we a' maun yield to fate,
Without remead;
Sae now there needs nae mair debate—
For Fleming 's dead.

Then cease for him to mourn an' grieve;
Live wisely, don't yoursel's deceive,
An' aye wi' heart an' min' believe
What's in the creed; †
For Fleming yet some day shall live,
Though now he's dead.

EPITAPH OF JOHN FLEMING.

He was made o' dirt, and he gaed upo' dirt,
Dirt was his meat an' cleeding;
He dee't amang dirt, he was buried 'mang dirt,
To dirty worms for feeding.

VERSES TO A SNUFFER,

WITH A PRESENT OF TOBACCO AND SNUFF.

Some like to chew the bitter leaf,
Or gar its reek play puff;
Some grun't to powder, ca't the chief
O' life's enjoyments— snuff!

Thou fen't on common fare langsyne
Whan thou dwalt in the Cuff;
But now, I ken, thou does incline
To tak' a pinch o' snuff.

---

† "I believe in the Resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*"

Accept, wi' this, some smoking twist,
Let Lizzy at it whiff,
An' keep the stoor, thysel', I trust
Thou'll fin't guid biting snuff.

An' tak' a penfu', never think
O' dearth, or lack o' stuff;
The drudge gets wark, the drouthy drink,
The snuffer gets a snuff.

When times look dark, an' threaten ill,
Or frien's look sour an' gruff,
Defy their warst, just grup the mill
An' tak' an extra snuff.

'Tis said strong liquor waukens wit—
Its whyles but loud an' rough;
Nor lang can drouthy cronies sit,
Without the pipe an' snuff.

Whisky aft mak's wise men insane,
And arrant cowards bluff;
Snuff clears our een, inspires our brain,—
There's naething, Rab, like snuff.

Would'st thou frae neibours favours seek,
Nor meet wi' a rebuff,
Tak' out thy mill, afore thou speak,
An' treat the fo'k wi' snuff.

Whan neibours flyte about their weans,
Or hens, wi' angry huff,
Thou'll please them soon, wi' little pains—
Fair talk, an' rowth o' snuff.

Whan fo'k turn drowsy in the kirk,
(An' duty's road turn aff,)
Aye rouse them to the holy wark,
By han'ing roun' the snuff.

The minister his Bible steeks
Whan he has said enough,
Sits doun, his snuff-horn gravely seeks,
And closes wi' a snuff.

The soger gangs whar honour ca's,
Whane'er the drum plays ruff:
What's honour whan the hero fa's?
Alas! no worth a snuff.

The lady draws her lily han'
Frae glove or ermine muff,
And kings and beggars fondly stan'
To dight the nose an' snuff.

Through life we grope our darklin' way,
Like weans at blin'-man's-buff;
Some wade in plenty ilka day,
An' some can scarce get snuff.

Frankly the snuffer tak's an gies;
Sure he's a stupid chuff
Wha toils through life, nor kens, nor pries
The guid effects o' snuff.

While epicures on dainties feed,
And costly liquors quaff,
Be thou content wi' halesome bread,
Pure drink, plain claes, an' snuff.

An' lang may frien's an' neibours see
Thy food has not been chaff:
Thou'll ne'er be sick, thou'll never dee,
While thou can tak' a snuff.

As grumphie fills, so says the tale,
Aye sourer turns the draff;
But sour wad be life's best, an' stale,
To thee, deprived o' snuff.

'Tis right, my frien', thy taste to please,
Though knowing anes should laugh
To see thee spen' thy gude bawbees,
An' fyle thy face wi' snuff.

Twa mouths to feed, some fo'k suppose
Owre mony by ane half—
The tane may thole a blink—the nose
Aince learn'd, cries out, snuff! snuff!

OVERTON, 1830.

VERSES

RECITED ON NEW-YEAR'S-DAY EVENING, 1840, AFTER A ROUP OF LAND AT BALGRAY, (LIFE-RENTED BY MRS. HARVIE.)

Now the auld year's awa an' the new year's beginnin',
An' Spring's comin' on to allow us full scope
By industry an' skill to prepare for the Harvest,
On the lan's we hae ta'en at the Bagra' roup.

Many young forward farmers embark for Australia,
An' the isles far awa' yont the Cape o' Good Hope;
We're as safe here at hame, takin' bits o' grun' yearly,
An' enjoying the feast o' the Bagra' roup.

It is right that these far distant lan's should be peopl'd,
But I like aye to see fo'k look weel ere they loup,
For there's hunders awa' that wad fain be here wi' us
This night, at the feast o' the Bagra' roup.

But whan Johnny goes roun' wi' the glass an' the bottle,
'Tis true we aft bid, an' scarce ken whan to stop;
An' shilling an' shilling mak' a great big sum total,
Sae we whyles tak' owre dear at the Bagra' roup.

Our far fam'd Auctioneer, too, milks to the last pouring—
For takin' in bodies, few wi' Geordy * can cope,
An' a wink or a nod, to his eye lang experienced,
Is as gude's the best speech at the Bagra' roup.

There's ne'er muckle loss by the man whase loof's wauket,
Not so wi' the idler, the fool, or the fop;
Were my sanction accepted, I freely cou'd caution
A' the tacksmen here met at the Bagra' roup.

For there's not a landowner in Beith or Kilbirnie,
Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan, Dalry, or Dunlop,
Can sum up as numerous a squad o' guid tenants,
As our mistress can count at her annual lan' roup.

An' here she has made for us ample provision,
Frae the field, frae the baker's, an' Hucksterer's shop,
An' the jug aft refilled wi' stout weel-tempered toddy,
To welcome the year, and rejoice at the roup.

Our tea-total chieftains would drench us wi' water,
Sma' yill or thin porter, an' sic like slip-slop;
These may do weel to slocken fo'k dry eatin' herrings,
But a wee drap guid whisky's the life o' a roup.

---

* The Late George Kerr, Auctioneer, Beith.

Some run to soirees, dandy balls, and processions,
(A search for enjoyment I ne'er will adopt,)
For the happiest o' times I enjoy through the season,
Is in parties like this at the end o' a roup.

We manure, we plough, an' we sow, an' we harrow,
But Providence kindly bestows the gude crop;
An' the weans will get bread, an' the kye will get fodder,
Ere we pay for the lan' we hae ta'en at the roup.

The proud an' the vain climb the hill of ambition,
An' stumble an' fall ere they come at the top:
In life's humble walks we aspire not to great things,
And we relish a treat like this after a roup.

May we lang enjoy health, wi' peace, freedom, an' plenty
O' milk, meal, potatoes, saut, sugar, an' soap,
Wi' a bit an' a sip o' some fare guid an' dainty,
Whan New-year's Day comes, an' the Bagra' roup.

May we live sober lives, an' be usefu' while living,
An' whan time frae existence dings out the last prop,
We'll retire much regretted by those wha best ken'd us,
An' lea' new haun's tae strive at the Bagra' roup.

But my subject grows grave; this is nae time for preaching,
Wi' your leave, then, my frien's, I my rhyming will stop:
I was just gaun to say 'twill be thought a great wonder
Should we a' meet here next New'r-day after the roup.

While our guid mistress lives, may she always hae plenty
O' tea, bread an' ham, or a nice mutton chop,
To tak' till hersel', or to treat a guid neighbour,
An' the fo'k that tak' lan' at the Bagra' roup.

THE BALGRAY RENT.

MARCH, 1841.

Last year, ye'll hae min', at the Roup o' the Bagra',
I incautiously ventured to hint
That the day was far aff, an' wad scarcely arrive,
Whan called on to pay up the rent.

But a year an' odd months hae since slippet awa
(For our hale term o' life is soon spent)
Since we met at the Roup, an' we're met here again
To settle the Bagra' rent.

Meal an' hay are baith cheap; but we ought to be glad
For the guid crap that Providence sent;
We've aye gotten our meat, an' whyles saved twa-three pounds,
To help, at term-time, wi' the rent.

Our kind mistress, too, is aye anxiously bent
Our wants an' desires to prevent,
For there's aye something guid to be got whan we meet
To tak' lan' or to pay last year's rent.

To the scribe's chilly office we gang wi' our siller,
Like the Pope's devotees keeping Lent,
And there's no ae bit gaun—be we cauld, be we hungry—
Though we pay the last bawbee o' rent.

I hae whyles thought them happy wha're lairds o' bit malings,
O' greater or lesser extent,—
They can farm as they like, an' subsist on the produce,
An' they needna to pay ony rent.

Yet I've seen haughty lairds o' guid, weel-stockit farms,
An' cash bringing in cent. per cent.,
Breaking stanes on the roads, an' employed cuttin' drains,
To puir tenants, wha paid a dear rent.

Flush'd wi' ease, wealth, an' praise, they run folly's career,
Till they find it too late to repent,
Whan involved in disgrace, debt, remorse, and disease,
They hae naething to gie for the rent.

We're a' sair working fo'k; much indulgence frae fortune
Through the past part o' life we ne'er kent;
But we'll wear the auld coat, an' we'll eat the coarse bread,
Ere we'll fa' far ahin' wi' the rent.

Now the seed time is come, an' in due time we'll reap,
If we still persevere, and not faint;
Here we *tak'* an' we *gie*,—at the last great court-day
We will a' get a share o' the rent.

We'll no envy the rich, nor look doun on the poor,
But wi' our ain lot be content;
An' we'll part in the hope to be merry neist year,
Whan we settle the Bagra' rent.

We hae seen mony happy events in our time,
An' read o' a guid wheen in print,
But we're aye geyan' sure to be socially blest
On the night o' the Bagra' rent.

JOSIE STRATHERN.

O there's music in woods, an' there music in waters,
An' it's heard in the breeze o'er the hill an' the cairn,
But wad ye hear nature an' art's sweetest concord,
Attend to the strains play'd by Josie Strathern.

He can play a' the tunes, new or auld, in this empire,
In Paris, Vienna, Rome, Frankfort, or Berne,—
Reels, jigs, strathspeys, waltzes, quicksteps, an' slow marches,
Are a' alike easy to Josie Strathern.

Whan he tunes up his fiddle, the youths flock aroun' him,
An' the wives canna' sit the weans' stockings to darn;
But young an' auld foot it, as lang as they're able,
To the mirth-makin' music o' Josie Strathern.

The ploughmen comes hame wi' his team frae the furrow,
The maid frae the byre 'mang the boyns an' the sharn,
An' the widow flings by a' her sables and sorrow,
To rejoice for a season wi' Josie Strathern.

At balls, kintra rockings, an' washings o' aprons,
Or hairst, whan the shearers hae coupit the kirn,
House-heatings, tea-parties, match-ploughings, or weddings—
The life o' sic parties is Josie Strathern.

He'll no be the first that'll flinch frae a party
Assembled in ale-house, hall, kitchen, or barn;
Wi' the drouthy he'll drink, wi' the merry be mirthfu',
For a' body's body is Josie Strathern.

An' he'll fit you wi' shoes, frae the lady's silk slipper
To the ploughman's stout brogues, nail'd wi' steel an' wi' airn;
An he'll either mak' new anes, drive tackets, or cobble,
For aye willin' to ser' you is Josie Strathern.

The Greeks they may boast their Timotheus and Orpheus,
The English o' Handel, and Arnold, and Arne,
An' Scotchmen may point to their Smiths, Gows, an' Gilmours,
But Beith fo'k may brag o' their Josie Strathern.

Music soothes the toil-worn, and revives the despondent,
An' softens the tyrant, relentless and stern;
It gies action to mirth, an' excites pure devotion,
An' sic strains we enjoy, play'd by Josie Strathern.

While the songs of the bard an' the strains of the viol
Charm the ear an' the heart o' man, maid, wife, an' bairn,
There will aye be musicians,—some waur an' some better,—
But we'll ne'er hear ane equal to Josie Strathern.

DONALD MONRO.

Some sing the exploits o' fam'd statesmen an' heroes,
Wha rule the rebellious an' combat the foe,—
Some sing o' their loves, ithers wail out their sorrows,
But I'll gie you a sang about Donald Monro.

He was rear'd in the north 'mang the hills, near Lochaber,
Whaur clansmen hae marched, an' loud bagpipes did blow;
In his youth he was trained baith to war an' hard labour,—
For his king an' his country lives Donald Monro.

But now, where the rich, ample garden discloses
Its varied productions, for use and for show,
'Mang the shrubs, and the fruits, and the sweet-smelling roses,
Wi' his spade and his knife, labours bold Donald Monro.

He can delve, he can plant, he can graft, he can gather
The weeds frae the soil, he can till, he can sow,—
He does all kinds of work, and braves all kinds of weather,
For nought comes amiss to Donald Monro.

When tir'd by the ills caused by fortune or folly,
Or cheer'd by the fruits from industry that flow,
Aye bear an' forbear, an' dismiss melancholy,
An' be thankful for guid things, says Donald Monro.

Some lay up in store for an ill day a-coming,
An' dee e'er the guid o' their labours they know;
But, happen what will, he's nae votary o' Mammon—
There's a hole in the purse worn by Donald Monro.

To err whyles a kennin is said to be human,
And constant experience proclaims it is so,
Yet the wisest o' men an' least foolish o' women
Hae some wee bit fau't—sae has Donald Monro.

He whyles tak's a glass wi' a frien' or acquaintance,
And he's no easy raised when he's aince on the go;
An' "it's needless to talk o' reform or repentance
While we yield to temptation," says Donald Monro.

Frae the glebe and the garden, supplies never failin'
Are drawn for the wants o' the high an' the low—
Let not greatness or pride ever leer at the calling
O' farmers, or men such as Donald Monro.

THE DRUNKARD'S SOLILOQUY,

IN IMITATION OF HAMLET'S.

To drink, or not to drink? That is the question—
Whether 'tis better still to rove about
From inn to inn, mad with the fumes of whisky,
Or make a vow against the use of spirits,
And save our health and money? Turn sober, wealthy.—
No more; and by this change to say we end
The headache, heart-burn, and a thousand ills
That drunkards suffer; 'tis a consummation
Sincerely to be wished—to eat—to drink—
To drink? perchance get drunk! Ay, there's the road;
When met in town with all our boon companions,
Must make us pause. There is the reason
That makes good-natured men drink all their days:
For who would bear the ills of cold and want,
The spurns of vintners, when his money's gone,
The duns of creditors, the beadle's chase,
The fears of jail, and all the rude insults
Which wretched drunkards from the rabble take,
When he himself might live at ease and comfort
In his own dwelling? Who would whisky swill,
And groan and spew about an ale-house door,
But that the dread of conquering rooted habit,
(That unsubdued tyrant, from whose grasp
Few people e'er escape) puzzles the will,
And bids us rather seek the other gill,
Then grope the way home to our cheerless dwellings.
Thus craving thirst makes drunkards of us still,
And many a well-formed scheme and resolution
Is broken through, 'midst riot and intemperance;
And foolish men, who once had pith and money,
With this regard, refuse to be reclaimed,
And die in abject poverty.

THE AULD MAN THAT LIVED IN BEITH.

TUNE—"*The auld wife ayont the fire.*"

In Beith there liv'd a frail auld man,
His age was sixty-five an' ten,
Wha took a freak, whan near his en',
That he wad gae an' marry.
The auld man that liv'd in Beith,
The aged man that dwell't in Beith,
The deein' man that liv'd in Beith,
He wad gae try an' marry.

He lee't, an' cheatet, pinch'd his wame,
Grew rich, by mony a dirty scheme,
But he turn'd auld, an' stiff, an' lame,
Black, crabbit, an' camstairie:
The rich auld man that liv'd in Beith,
The worthless man that dwell't in Beith,
The crabbit man that liv'd in Beith,
Wad fain gae try an' marry.

He thought on Meg, sae trig an' douse,
To wash his claise an' clean his house,
That ne'er a spider nor a louse
In his abode might tarry:
The aged man that liv'd in Beith,
The dirty man that liv'd in Beith,
The black auld man that wonn'd in Beith,
Saw nae relief but marry.

He promis'd cash, he hecht her braws,
Himsel', an' a' within his wa's—
Nae bitin' horse, nor empty sta's,
But brimfu' cups to carry:

The loving man that liv'd in Beith,
The amorous man that dwell't in Beith,
The frank auld man that stay'd in Beith,
Wad gie his all an' marry.

But, ah! the road to her was lang,
The man was frail, an' cou'dna gang,
His kin said things war a' gaun wrang—
The auld fool wad them harry:
The frail auld man that liv'd in Beith,
The cross'd auld chap that liv'd in Beith,
The vex'd auld man that dwell't in Beith,
They wadna let him marry.

They watched him closely oot an' in,
Said he was daft, they wad him binn,
The frail auld Beith man didna win,
To court his winsome deary:
The captive man that liv'd in Beith,
The daft auld fool that was in Beith,
The fail'd auld man that liv'd in Beith,
He ne'er gat leave to marry.

Ye youngsters a' that hear my sang,
Gif e'er ye marry, do't ere lang,
For time an' care will ding you wrang,
An' ye'll grow stiff an' sairy,
Just like the auld black man o' Beith,
The doitet, worn-out man o' Beith,
The single man that liv'd in Beith,
Wha cou'dna maun to marry.

Ye thowless wights wha ne'er hae wed,
Though years hae siller'd o'er your head,
Lie cauld an' restless in your bed,
When winter tries you sairly,

Ye're just as daft's the man o' Beith,
Your staunch auld frien' that liv'd in Beith;
Ye'll perish like the man o' Beith,
Wha dee't ere he could marry.

Whan ye grow auld, gin ye be poor,
Your kin will drive you frae their door;
Gin ye be rich, they'll use ye waur—
They'll never let you marry.
This fate befel the man o' Beith,
The poor rich man that dwell't in Beith,
A warning to the fo'k o' Beith
To gang in time an' marry.

LOCHWINNOCH MUSIC AND SCONES.

. . . "Souple scones, the wale o' food."
—BURNS.

Did ye e'er hear the soun' o' Strathern's noble fiddle—
Its loud, warlike chords, or its soft mellow tones?
Hae ye seen the big fires, or the braid baking girdle,
Or tasted the mistress' thick fadgel scones? *

Were ye learn'd to sing, dance, walk in martial procession?
Hae ye marched to the fray by the bagpipe's loud drones?
In dry burning climes hae ye lang'd for cauld water,
Or dream'd ye were eating thick mashlam scones?

* Joseph Strathern, an eminent violin-player, at that time in Lochwinnoch, and his wife, justly celebrated for her skill and industry in baking and selling scones of a peculiarly grateful description.

Would ye see your dear friends active, mannerly, thrifty
(I mean the young Jennies, Jeans, Willies, and Johns),
Sen' them doun—they'll learn music an' dancing frae Josie—
Frae the mistress, industry, an' baking o' scones.

There are fathers sae void o' the music o' nature,
Whan their weans cry for bread, they present them wi' stones;
Yet they'll pay as much coin for a mutchin o' whisky
As would buy a hale batch o' guid health-giving scones.

Bread, o' whatever sort, is the staff o' existence—
It strengthens the heart, an' puts fat in the bones—
It mak's youths plump an' braw,—e'en the aged an' the toothless
Are sustained by munching fine, saft, souple scones.

Wi' a slice o' saut ham, or a nice row o' butter,
Sugar, coffee, or tea, brought frae far distant zones,
An' sundries sic like, coal, and saft boiling water,
Rich feasts are got up upo' Lochwinnoch scones.

Ye fo'k o' Lochwinnoch, be gratefu', be thankfu',
For sure by High Heaven ye are much favour'd ones—
Ye hae physic, an' plenty o' baith law an' gospel,
Wark, wages, pure water, fine music, an' scones.

Frae the cauld northern blast by green hills ye're protected,
Which like pyramids *stan'*, or large beautifu' cones;
You just want your friend Adam to drain your broad marshes.*
An' convert their rough herbage to fine wheaten scones.

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* The village of Lochwinnoch is beautifully situated on the north-west bank of the loch. This lake derives its name from the Gaelic *loch* (a lake) and *wineuch* (a broil, a fray, or tumult). It was formerly much more extensive than at present. This very enter-

James Adam the good, the ingenious, the honest—
Much ye owe to this best o' auld Scotland's sons;
Lasting marks of his genius an' skill stan aroun' ye—
What hundreds of labourers hae eaten his scones!

By Providence lang may ye a' be protected
Frae prisons, fires, floods, an' vile pawnbrokers' loans;
Aye be sober, industrious, an' temperate in a' things,
An' ye'll aye get a share o' drink, cleading, and scones.

Great, wise, usefu' folks aft arise 'mang the people,
And tyrants an' scoundrels whyles sit upo' thrones;
But let praise be gien freely whare'er it's deserved—
An' first to the housewives wha bake the guid scones.

Though our tatoes be gane, we hope time will restore them,
An' that Heaven, in mercy, our ruin postpones;
Some will ne'er fare the worse, ithers must endure hardships,
But they'll no be ill aff that get plenty o' scones.

DESPERATION AND WASTERATION.

TUNE—*Moderation, &c.*

Aweel, I'll sing you a new sang, made of a modern date,
About a wretched auld miser, wha' toil'd baith soon an' late,
An' gather'd gear by every mean, dirty, desperate gate,
An' whan puir fo'k cam' to beg, he roar'd, an' cursed, an' flate.

Desperation, desperation,
It was a wonnerfu' desperation.

---

prising gentleman (James Adam, Esq.), then of Barr, among many other local improvements, about thirty years ago made an embankment in the manner of the inhabitants of Holland and the Netherlands, dried a large portion of the loch, and recovered several hundred acres of rich carse lands from the dominion of the water.

Wi' an auld girnin' wife, wi' a face as black's the verra grun',
Wha ken'd naething about what belang'd to cleverness or fun,
For whan the servant lasses had wrought a' day, an' spun,
She gied them wonnerfu' little meat, an' girn't and flate whan done.

Desperation, &c.

Wi' an auld worn-out mare, worth about five sterling pounds,
Whilk he grass'd on the king's highway, for to hain his own grounds,
(But she wasna verra able to travel far frae her ain bounds),
An' a purse fu' o' bonny rough shillings, dollars, an' crouns.

Desperation, &c.

Wi' an auld herring barrel, almost stripped of a' its hoops,
An' twa aik meal garnels, placed in twa o' the auld sooty neuks,
An' an auld lean canker'd collie, easily ken'd by its looks,
An' a kitchen that maintain'd a score o' pigs, hens, an' guid gray deuks.

Desperation, &c.

Wi' a wonnerfu' frugal scheme whan supper-time was come,
Saut on a black stool, an' a tatoe atween ilk finger and thumb,
Wi' a drink o' water or whey, instead o' beer, porter, or rum—
Life's guid things he refused, an' at giein' thanks was dumb.

Desperation, &c.

Aweel, the auld man grew sick at last, and chanced to dee,
An' left a' tae his son, an' a verra foolish young man was he,
As by an' by I will endeavour to let you see—
How he soon gar'd his father's auld mooly ha'f-crouns flee.

Wasteration, wasteration,
It was a wonnerfu' wasteration.

For this young chap (wha had been hirdet soon an' late,
Wi' little siller in his pouch, but a great heap o' folly in his pate)
Begude his new career at a most unprecedented rate,
Like a mad bull broken loose, raging up an' doun the gate.

Wasteration, &c.

Wi' a nice wee gill stoup, that was baith smooth and clear,
Successively filled wi' liquor sweet an' strang, but wonnerfu' dear,
Wi' a half-a-dozen blackguards, to drink, an' curse, an' swear,
Wi' lang black beards, necks, heels, an' elbows bare.

Wasteration, &c.

Wi' a new fashion, whane'er the gloamin' was come,
Awa' to the public-house on a ridin' pony—an' be gone,
Leaving naebody ahin' tae manage affairs at home,
Till he was turned out at last, naething but poverty, skin, an' bone.

Wasteration, &c.

THE LAMENT OF A CAREFUL PERSON OVER HIS OLD HAT.

When my auld hat was purchased new,
Its muckle price I ne'er did rue,
For, guidness, there was verra few
Cou'd wi't compare;
'Twas made o' silk, an' fine saft woo'
Stripp't aff the hare.

'Twas English mak', an' ne'er a hatter
Produced a hat that pleased me better;
Firm proof it was 'gainst win' an' water;
Fierce hail an' snaw
Might rage an' drive, but what the matter—
It stood them a'.

Whan it was on, I aye was bauld,
An' neither dreaded heat nor cauld;
Whan ither fo'k war' gaun twa-fauld
Against the storm,
Quite freely I cou'd wag ilk spaul,
An' felt nae harm.

At balls or weddings, kirk or fair,
Whar fashion shines wi' witchin' air,
Mang bonny lads an' lasses rare,
Wi' bonnets braw,
Like my guid hat nae hats were there—
It dang them a'.

But time (which silent ruin brings
On mighty nations, thrones, an' kings,
An' raises beggars on its wings
To grandeur's throne)
Dispoiled my hat, like ither things,
Upo' my croun.

Now a' its rim was broken doun,
An' mony a seam sew'd roun' an roun';
To leeward batter'd was the croun
By weather's dunt;
Wi' lime it likewise was turn'd broun,
An' sairly brunt.

Much sport this to my comrades gave,
Wha girned like fools, an' drew an' rave,
An' in the fire it aften drave,
An' wadna settle,
For though I aft guid counsel gave,
They min't it little.

What cou'd I do?—my head gaed bare,
My hat wad skyte the drap nae mair;
I cast it frae me in despair,
To lift it never,
And to the merchant's did repair,
An' caft anither.

RECEIPT FOR MAKING SCANDALOUS POETRY.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF YOUNG POETASTERS.

OCCASIONED BY READING A COPY OF VILE, DEFAMATORY VERSES ON SOME GOOD, INDUSTRIOUS NEIGHBOURS.

Select some fit men,
The best that ye ken,
Weel skill'd in beneficial labours,
Wha hae toil'd day an' night,
An' exerted their might,
For the good o' themsel's an' their neighbours.

Tak' fo'k dead an' fo'k livin'
Fo'k rejoicin', fo'k grievin',
Tak' youths in love's mazes bewildrin',
Tak' fathers an' mothers,
Wives, sisters, an' brothers,
Sad widows, an' fatherless children;

Tak' fair wenches an' beaus,
Dress'd in their best clothes,
Accomplish'd to shine most completely
In a fine courtship party;
Wi' bread mak' them hearty,
An' wine to syne't over sae sweetly.

Tak' sheep, cows, an' boves,
Meal-barrels, brose, puves,
Compound them wi' lies and vague clashes—
The produce of folly,
Whan young chaps come jolly
Frae kirks an' frae fairs wi' the lasses.

Tak' Bibles an' prayers,
Guid advices an' cares,
Tak' reason, religion, an' conscience,
Guid morals an' health,
Reputation an' wealth—
Mix them up wi' calumnious nonsense.

Tak' a dull, stupid hash,
Ha'f man an' ha'f ass,
An' this precious collection then show him—
Gie him paper, pen, ink,
He'll produce in a blink
A complete, modern, scandalous poem.

June, 1811.

BORLAND'S PORTER.

A POEM.

Analysis :—Address ; Borland—his readiness to serve the public ; Porter, a drink for all classes of people ; Brewers of it noticed ; Value of it to ladies, married or single—lovers—dealers ; Good at feasts ; Cruickshank's orations characterised ; Temperance people porter-drinkers—ready to relapse into spirit-drinking ; Characters more likely to resist temptation ; Reformers—what ought to be their object ; Advice—when to drink porter—when ardent spirits—what quantity ; A serious reflection—caution to drunkards and gluttons ; A wish, &c.

> "British liquor some inspires with gladness,
> And makes some droop in sober sadness ;
> Makes politicians sound to battle,
> And lovers of their mistress prattle ;
> While, with potations bottle deep,
> It lulls the serious sot to sleep."
> —HORACE.

> "The fool sucks wisdom as he porter sups,
> And cobblers grow fine speakers o'er their cups."

Hark, drouthy bodies, great an' sma,
John Borland's ready at your ca';
For he's begun this year or twa,
Or rather shorter,
To brew a beverage suits ye a'—
Guid, nappy porter.

Frae Royal William, fostering dad
To honest fo'k, sae to the bad,
Doun to the mason's service lad,
That carries mortar,
Wha winna drink, we'd ca' him mad,
A mug o' porter.

For London porter some protest,
While ithers say that Cheap's is best,
Macfarlane, Tennant, a' the rest,
Hae some supporter;
I'm no' far seen, but I insist
For Borland's porter.

The merchant and the traveller bold,
Wha brave the extremes o' heat an' cold,
Through paths terraqueous, life to hold,
Would freely barter
Their ivory, spices, furs, and gold,
For Borland's porter.

It cheers the ladies who lie in,*
An' clears up those wi' faces din;
Beauty an' merit's sure to win
The tardy courter—
Successfu' courtships aft begin
While drinking porter.

At toun or kintra festal cheer,
Some drink dear wine, some swill sma' beer;
They're baith guid drinks, but I stan' here
A firm exhorter
To quat sic weak, expensive gear,
An' try the porter.

Whan blustering coupers bargains mak',
An' lies, an' muckle profits tak',
Loud they gar their lang whips play smack,
The yauds to nortor,
An' o' their trots an' boosings crack,
O'er Borland's porter.

---

* In former times, females, who were thus circumstanced, drank home-brewed beer.

Whan temperance bodies meet to damn
The fo'k that tak' a moderate dram,*
An' hear the truths, the lies, an' flam
Raird by the *carter*,
Nae stronger brew gaes doun wi' them
Than Borland's porter.

Wi' a' their tracts, harangues, an' din,
It's nought but screwing in the pin—
They'll try the whisky yet, ye'll fin',
Or something smarter;
I'd rather see them fill their skin
Wi' Borland's porter.

Gie me the man that tak's a share
O' ought that's gaun, whate'er's the fare—
Wi' habits fix'd, I'd trust him mair
Than ony starter,
Wha *writes* he'll ne'er drink stronger ware
Than yill or porter.

Wad fo'k a moderate course pursue
In a' they think, an' say, an' do,
There's naething a' the warl' through
Wad prove a hurter—
They'd drink wine, rum, an' whisky, too,
An' yill an' porter.

Whan powerfu' nations stretch their arm
For state, for kirk, an' self-reform,
An' black corruption feels alarm
Frae ilka quarter,
Ye patriots cool your passions warm
Wi' Borland's porter.

* This language, to some, may appear strong, but it is true; for in all their tracts and speeches, which I have seen or heard, they uniformly *assert* that *moderate* drinking is the cause of drunkenness, and the great bar against the cure of its evils.

To habits ill nae quarter gie,
Gar idlers cultivate the lea,
Frae slavery's chains the wretched free;
Nae harsh extorter,
Nor idler loun, deserves to prie
John Borland's porter.

Frae fierce extremes aye haud aback,
An' walk in moderation's track,
Nor heed the mad enthusiast quack,
Or saucy orter,
But *whyles* a *glass* o' spirits tak',
An' *whyles* tak' porter.

Whan Time does natural vigour tame,
Or pale disease consumes the frame,
Whan med'cines fail health to reclaim,
Or ease the torture,
Go drink it, mull'd, an' die, nor blame
John Borland's porter.

Wi' strong drink some their lives destroy,
Same, wi' guid meat, their stomachs cloy—
May we, in health, much guid enjoy,
Through life's short charter,
An' aye be cheery on the way
Wi' draps o' porter.

LINES ON SEEING A HAWK PURSUING A LARK.

> "But is not man to man a prey?
> Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay."
> —GAY.

O wherefore, cruel tyrant of the skies,
Dost thou against thy neighbour hostile rise?
To take the life!—O horrid, dark design!
What have larks done to either thee or thine?
Have they in wrath destroyed thy hopeful brood,
Burnt up thy nest, or snatched away thy food?
Did they a hostile banner e'er display
Against thy race but for one single day?
No; view their humble dwelling on the ground—
In them aspiring thoughts were never found,
Except when winter's past; in cheerful spring
Their chief employ is mount on high and sing.
Stop! wretch, confess them innocent at once;
But, ah! sweet innocence is no defence
Where tyrants absolute dominion sway—
The innocent become their easy prey.
Not true alone when savage tribes we scan,
Alike, or worse, is civilised man.
What do we read in the historic page?
Oppression, blood, and crimes in every age:
What horrid work does such records display,
Unparalleled by furious beasts of prey?
By nature's impulse, seeking what is good,
These only ravage for their daily food:
But mankind, tyrants, more ferocious still,
Without the smallest gain, their neighbours kill.

Ah, Innocence! thy lot on earth is hard,—
Distress and death is often thy reward.
Thou seem'st abandoned to thy cruel foes—
Where's thy avenger, and the scourge of those?
Can Justice now no more the sceptre sway?
Yes, Hope looks forward to a glorious day,
To which all parties are at once referred,
When Justice shall dispense a due reward
To every one. Then Innocence shall move,
From trouble free, in her own sphere above;
While tyrants shall exert their cruel might
On one another, through the endless night.

1806.

PERRY'S ELEGY.

THIS WAS A BEAUTIFUL RIDING PONY, BELONGING TO MISS PATRICK OF TREARNE.

O Death, when will thy vast desire
Be satisfied?—when wilt thou tire
To ravage earth, thy ain empire?
Such is thy greed,
Nought but the life can be thy hire—
For Perry's dead.

Sin' he is dead, ye ponies a',
An' fo'k baith near an' far awa',
In mournfu' strains lament his fa',
For weel ye need—
The bonniest horse that e'er ye saw
Is lately dead.

'Twad be an endless task to tell
How far this creature did excel;
But form ideas to yoursel'
While I proceed,
Proclaimin' roun', wi' dolefu' yell,
That Perry's dead.

His size was neither big nor little,
But handsome, made o' gallant mettle,
As clever's ony weaver's shuttle
That e'er ca'd thread;
But O the thread o' life is brittle—
For Perry's dead.

By nature he was mild an' canny,
As guid in full as he was bonny—
To equal him, ye'll scarce get ony
O' Ayrshire breed;
His worth can not be tell'd in money—
But O he's dead.

His work is done—he'll never mair
E'er carry roun' his mistress fair,
Through pleasant groves, to tak' the air,
At e'enin' tide,
Nor o' her kind caresses share—
For Perry's dead.

Had he, like some, been spoil'd an' wrought,
Or death by auld age on been brought?—
No; strength or beauty serves us nought,
Whan death mak's head;
This wakes anew the painfu' thought—
For Perry's dead.

Deplore this loss, ye ladies wha
Ride upon coursers swift an' braw;
Ye coupers an' horse-jockies a',
Proclaim abreed
The flower o' horse' is ta'en awa—
For Perry's dead.

O, how uncertain's warld's gear,
E'en life, an' everything that's here—
Time every object aff does bear
On wings o' speed;
Think on this mournfu' instance clear—
For Perry's dead.

EPISTLE TO JAMES WILSON, THIRDPART—1805.

The light o' day was fairly doun,
'Tween three an' four in the afternoon—
It being winter season—
The moon was shinin' siller clear,
The twinklin' starns thick did appear
Around the vast horizon—

That night, ye'll min', as we had set,
Our manuscripts we did ready get,
A' packit up like carriers,
Then baith awa', wi' ae consent,
Frae Overton to Trearne went,
To crack wi' our superiors.

Wha cou'd that night mair happy be,
An' better pleased, than you an' me?
Nane! even kings an' nobles:
Sic times, whan fortune sweet does smile,
Mak's fo'k forget vexatious toil,
An' a' life's countless troubles.

How, pleasant, James, it is to see
Fo'k live in peace an' unity,
Vile discord's mouth to stop aye—
When those in elevated station
Act for the welfare o' the nation,
An' mak' their neighbours happy.

Weel we had far'd, an' crackit fine
O' events new, an' things langsyne—
O' rich an' poor fok's manners;
At length the clock did notice gie
'Twas time for us to gang an' lea'
Our fair, kind entertainers.

We bade guid night, an' cam' awa',
While chattin' freely 'tween us twa,
Weel pleased wi' our adventure—
Wi' bundles large o' borrowed wit,*
Though ablins little enough o' it
In our weak pows did centre.

Now, Jamie, lang we've cronies been,
I hope that nought will intervene
To have the sma'est tendence
Our friendship in the least to spill—
Sae let us try to manage still
A regular correspondence.

* Books from the library at Trearne, at that time spelled Treehorn.

I dinna mean this length to go,
As mak' our warks a public show,
An' thole fell critic's twistles;
But briefly whyles our min's to tell,
In verse or prose, as suits oursel',
By writing short epistles.

There's ae thing now, I plainly see,
Frae black reproach we'll ne'er be free,
Whatever road we walk in;
But let us keep a guid defence,
An' gie our neighbours nae offence,
An' let fo'k ay be talkin'.

VERSES TO A YOUNG LADY.

"The Muse is fir'd! and let the Muse be fir'd!
Who would not speak, when what he speaks he feels?"

Up, Muse! with life thy theme renew—
Accept, dear maid, the tribute due
From one who feels regard for you—
Not to offend,
Presumes not on a higher view
Than of a friend.

That night, ye'll min', spent with you—then
I homeward hied, in joy and pain—
Pain'd so to part, yet did retain
Hope's cheering gleam—
Joy'd, too, to think I did obtain
Your high esteem.

The friendly beil', rich bread and cheese,
Rare spoil frae the industrious bees,
And liquor pure, which quickening gies
Unto the whole,
And female sweetness, form'd to please
And win the soul.

Let tipplers quaff frae Bacchus' bowl—
I envy not, with feast of soul,
In friendship's tide of thought to roll,
What fare like this?
And Love's flame, to cement the whole,
Is perfect bliss.

It's no' long yet since, playful, you,
At e'ening, frisked round the plow,
Ambitious, when frae toil we drew,
To get a ride
On cheerie naig—obtained it, too,
Wi' mickle pride.

Matured by Nature's parent care,
With wit and beauty ample share,
May heaven regard the fabric fair
With watchful eye,
An' make one of some happy pair
In wedlock's tie.

Wou'd you be happy, virtue's way
Pursue, as morn to brighter day—
Let spotless innocence display
A heart that's true,
And grace benign shall sweetly play
Around your brow.

For what avails the painted skin
Unless the mind be fair within?
This pure esteem and love does win,
And doth not miss
To point the way frae haunts of sin
To lasting bliss.

While, through this life, of ills a swarm
We must endure, some powerful arm
Shield you from each surrounding harm
With tender care—
A lover true, with feelings warm,
Fall to your share.

Be yours, while life's up-road you clim',
A cup of good things to the brim,
And nightly may the pleasant dream
Your rest renew—
While reading this, you'll think on him
Wha thinks on you.

OVERTON, *1809*.

EPITAPH ON A MISER.

Here lies a man whose heart was in his purse,
But money prov'd to him a heavy curse;
For neither back was clothed nor belly fed,
Nor slept he sound nor warm when in his bed.
He scrupled not his neighbours to oppress,
Nor yet himself, his riches to increase.
'Mang wealth insatiate, still he craved for more,
But wealth deprived him of his god—his store;
He lies—ye worldlings, catch the thought, how killing!
With him you'll lie—deprived of every shilling.

THE MUCKLE FAT COW,

SLAUGHTERED IN BEITH, BY J. MILLAR, NOV., 1848.

I hae tasted fed veal, lamb, an' sweet wedder mutton,
An' hae aft been regaled wi' the flesh o' the sow;
Ox beef, fat an' lean, salt an' fresh, I hae eaten—
Now I've dined on a *bit* o' Barcosh's fat cow.

She was pure Ayrshire breed,* bought at aught pun' notes, farrow,
Whan turned out to graze where the white clover grew;
Next fed on green food, an' substantial farm produce—
For weel kens the laird how to mak' a fat cow.

Some kye devour food, but thrive not in proportion,
But here the reverse, as we see, has been true;
She was fifty tron stanes weight o' prime beef an' tallow—
Aught tron stanes o' creesh had the muckle fat cow.

In Millar's flesh mart hung this rare, noble carcass,
Which hundreds o' *beef-likers* cam' for to view,
An' ane an' a wished it had been their guid fortune
To enjoy sic a mart as Barcosh's big cow.

---

* This cow was reared by Mr. Craig, farmer in Ryesholm, on some high grounds belonging to him, between Dalry and West Kilbride, and purchased and fed by J. Cochran, Esq. of Barcosh, as above narrated.

Here the far-famed *sirloin*, or more ample *beef baron*,*
May be got, with tid pieces to boil, roast, or stew;
An' the neat, thrifty housewife, frae clean sorted offals,
Mak's nice compound meat—whyles the best o' the cow.

We hae Millar the *Less*, Farmer Crawford, an' Bobbie,
Alexander the Great, whom nae foe can subdue,
Wha boast their prime meat, in pun's, hale bouks, or quarters,
But wad rather sell drams than the banes o' a cow.

Langsyne the bien farmers, for flesh through the winter,
Took a cow starved an' milked the hale simmer through;
They had naething but skin, muckle banes, an' tough sinews,
No worth a tron stane o' Barcosh's fat cow.

Fresh herrings or saut anes *whyles* pass for guid kitchen;
Fat hens, geese, an' turkeys are shared 'mang a few;
But nae meat agrees wi' a soun' healthy stomach
Like the weel prepared beef o' the ox or the cow.

---

* The most popular joint of beef is universally allowed to be the loin, which, on account of its having been once actually knighted by Charles the Second, in a fit of royal condescension and jocularity, is now denominated Sir *loin*. This ample joint has given rise to a well-known ballad, styled "The Roast Beef of Old England," and it still continues to make a conspicuous figure at the table of all

"Who hospitably live,
And strangers with good cheer receive."

Two *sirloins* joined together, without having the back-bone cut asunder, are called a "baron of beef." The author of the "Seasons" (Thomson) places the sirloin at the head of his autumnal feast:—

"First the fuelled chimney blazes wide;
The tankards foam, and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking Sir *loin*, stretched immense
From side to side, in which, with desperate knife,
They deep incision make, and talk the while
Of England's glory, ne'er to be defaced,
While hence they borrow vigour."

May the time come whan labour, weel paid, an' guid morals,
Bread, tatoes, an' beef to each one will allow;
An' the Laird aye to keep his estate in condition,
An' aye now an' then to produce sic a cow.

O there's mony a braw maid for the Laird mak's her prayer
(Should he mak' a right choice, he'll hae nae cause to rue),
An' the ane that's sae lucky 'ill be aye sure at *tea time*
O' a roast o' nice ham frae some muckle fat cow.

THE BED.

A SONG.

A guid warm bed, an' a weel made bed,
A' body should keep a nice warm bed;
For nought keeps the cauld win' outside the shade
Like a weel made bed, an' a cosy bed.

The weans gin the gloamin' fret, yaumer, and greet,
Quite done up wi' play, sleep, an' sair hackit feet,
And the mother, wi' praising an' flyting, is glad
To see them a' stowed in their warm, cosy bed.

The farmer, removed frae oppression an strife,
Comes hame, reads the papers, or chats wi' his wife;
And, though tired wi' the thrashin', the plough, or the spade,
He's refreshed, ere the morn, in his warm, cosy bed.

A snooze on a chair, or a public-house floor,
Where strong men are made weak, and rich fo'k are made poor,
May recover a chap whase sma' prudence has fled,
But it's no' like a sleep in a warm, cosy bed.

When quarrels arise, an' you apt to get fu',
Or onything else that ye're likely to rue,
Though fools may loud laugh, or vile knaves may persuade,
Rin aff and ensconce yersel's safe in your bed.

Not to idly doze, but to shun the sair ills
O' couping auld horses and signing bank bills;
For mony a bien lairdie, by driving sic trade,
Has tint his ain bed—aye, lain wanting a bed.*

For mysel', I was hardly e'er worth a grey groat,
An' mony a cauld day hae gane wantin' a coat;
But I'll live on coarse fare, an' gang yet thinly clad,
Ere I want my guid bed—my nice, cosy, warm bed.

Young men an' young maidens, my sang ye hae heard,
And there's ae thing here merits your special regard—
Look weel roun' about ye afore that ye wed,
And partners select wha can keep a guid bed.

A weel made bed, &c.

---

* "Be thou not one of those that strike hands, or that become surety for debts; for if thou hast nothing wherewith to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?"—SOLOMON.

VERSES ON THE DEPARTURE OF THOMAS GOWANS FOR AMERICA.

Rich fo'k are aye famed for their knowledge and wisdom,
Though aft it's a' nought but a show and a sham;
But I'll show you a man strictly honest and knowing—
Nae rich man is he, but poor Collier Tam,

He was born an' brought up 'mang the hills o' New Cumnock,*
And, in search o' employment, to Beith side he cam',
And for years he's been usefu', by deeds and example—
Much guid might be learned frae poor Collier Tam.

Whan he came frae his wark, he was aye wet and dirty,
But, whan sorted, was cheery an' brisk as a lam',
An' weans an' auld fo'k were a' fond to be near him—
They got tales an' queer stories frae Collier Tam.

The maist o' his tribe spen' their earnings on Sunday,
On whisky, tobacco, tea, steak, and saut ham,
Then they starve the hale week, or get *tick* frae the grocers,
But there's part left *to-morrow* by Collier Tam.

---

* I have since learned that he was born and brought up in Paisley. From his conversation, I found that he had practised coal-digging at many places through Scotland. After coming to "Beith side," he digged coals to me four years.—A. A.

They despise law and order, and form combinations
Against social freedom, and fight, curse, and damn;
Sic dark deeds he shunned—free trade and just dealing,
"Peace and guid will," is the motto o' Collier Tam.

Now he's o'er the braid sea, wi' his weel-won sma' treasure,
To inhabit the land o' great, big Uncle Sam;
And ne'er truer soul left the shores o' auld Scotia,
When on shipboard, at Glasgow, went Collier Tam.

And mony braw lasses wad fain hae gane wi' him,
An' left a' their sweethearts, their dad, an' their mam;
But his purse was but light, an' he cou'dna deceive them,
Sae they're left to lament honest Collier Tam.

An' he'll fell the tall trees, and subdue the coarse herbage,
An' cultivate maize, wheat, potato or yam—
He'll enjoy life and health, and the fruit o' his labours,
Nor again dig the mine—for he's "Rich Farmer Tam."

Wi' him lang acquaint, we were vex'd at *last parting*—
Should I e'er see him mair, we'll hae ae social dram;
I am sure he'll do weel, he deserves to be happy—
Sae farewell a while, honest Collier Tam.

OVERTON, *March 29, 1850.*

LETTER TO A STUDENT IN GLASGOW.

Dear Sir,

It was my expectation, on your last vacation, to enjoy a visitation in my habitation, to have some confabulation on a great variation of things in the nation, and by anticipation of your future destination; but getting intimation you were off to your station, I felt much vexation lest our friendly communication might come to a termination; but, on consideration, it was my determination that a vast accumulation of business, in rotation, held you on that occasion, against your inclination.

Whatever be the resultation, without deviation make earnest application to your present education. Set an high valuation on all kinds of information, and with deliberation, and mature examination, make due preparation to preach the great salvation from sin and damnation; and by powerful exhortation, and heavenly illumination, on Divine revelation, effect the restoration of a perverse generation, from a state of condemnation and moral degradation to mature regeneration and glorious exaltation.

Now, without disputation, this is an high occupation, above calculation, in its final demonstration. Let not this elevation cause the smallest alteration of your conversation with the rest of the creation. Let pride and ostentation be held in abomination; resist all temptation to hurtful dissipation, nor court vain admiration by empty declamation. Let

every speculation and elaborate oration in the great congregation, or private association, without reservation, promote edification; and show your moderation in every situation, and gain the approbation of every relation, and with humiliation attain true dignification.

But a long continuation of such a compilation would derange my imagination, and have little signification, but for a manifestation of pedantic affectation: but, if worth your observation, a short lucubration in your hours of relaxation, by way of explication, or friendly emendation, will be a gratification and lasting consolation much prized in the estimation of yours, with veneration, A. Aitken.

1815.

P.S.—Having passed a long probation, and got your high legation with a lucrative presentation in a populous location, aye recall your obligation, in your daily avocation and Christian ministration, to discourage litigation and oppressive domination. Let sound civilisation and personal reformation rest on truth's secure foundation. Give the sons of tribulation, disease, grief, and privation, your sincere commiseration and helping mitigation. With fervent animation announce the proclamation of God's reconciliation and gracious acceptation, through Christ's great expiation and prevalent mediation, as cause of exultation and joyful gratulation, to all the population; and may no false accusation or sly insinuation e'er blot your reputation, or disturb your meditation; and may your compensation, an ample remuneration, exceed the calculation of Mammon importation from blood-stained excavation, and when time, chance, and mutation are merged in fixation will be its enduration. A. A.

LETTER TO D. CALDWELL.

Get up, my Muse, now once for all—
For this may be my hin'most call—
An' though thou's lame, an' frail, an' aul',
I would be keen
To write twa verse to D. Calwall,
My aul'est frien'.

A lang half century has been spent
Sin' you an' I were first acquent;
At mak'in' sangs ye then were kent
Your skill to try—
John Gemmill first put them in print,
Doun at Dalry.

At Little O'erton, o'er the gate,
Ye dwalt wi' Tamson Will an' Kate;
Willie was quick, an' ye were blate,
An' Kate was sly—
Your counsel aft kept the debate
Frae rising high.

Willie was knowing, honest, brave,
But wad do a' things else than weave;
His error he wad ne'er perceive,
Nor halt an' swither—
Whan ae scheme did his hopes deceive,
He tried anither.

He farmed and dairy'd, fed a sow,
Taught dancing, writing, singing, too;
He tell'd his scholars a' he knew
Wi' right guid will,
An' whisky made, far out o' view,
On the Cuff hill.

Nae man can say his life is sinless—
O' *dirty tricks* Will's life was stainless;
To write his actions wad be en'less,
Nor fetch renown;
He dee't, auld, poor, but far frae frien'less,
In Paisley toun.

For you, ye rather liket ease—
A walk beneath green leafy trees,
Or 'mang the whins, where thrifty bees
Collect their food,
An' wee birds hatch, an' sing nice glees
To train their brood.

To read the poets ye were fain,
In lofty, or soft lyric strain,
Or solemn, gay, sublime, or plain
The inspiration,
An' whyles a sma' chant o' your ain,
For recreation.

In gloamings fine I aye was glad
When ye cam', ere we gaed to bed,
To talk o' books that ye had read,
An' hear the news
O' markets, bloody wars, an' trade,
'Mang Turks an' Jews.

But, Davie, man, wi' you an' me,
Times are na' as they wont to be;
We ance could frisk it o'er the lea,
Erect, strong, rapid,
Now we are auld, bow'd doun, an' wee,
Dull, powerless, vapid.

Your faithfu', loving wife, ye lost,
Just when her aid you needed most;
By near relations aften cross'd
Nor rich your calling,
Frae place to place o'er often toss'd,
To fin' a dwelling.

Yet ye hae nae cause to despair,
For God o' you has had a care,
An' now, whan ye can *push* nae mair
Your usual labours,
Has *kindly*, *wisely* placed you near
The best o' neighbours.

On Christ's all-perfect expiation,
And ever prevalent mediation,
Let us rely for free salvation,
From guilt and woe;
For He is raised to highest station,
Bliss to bestow.

I, too, am o' my wife bereaved—
The ae best boon I e'er received—
I fondly hop'd she would hae lived
To haud my head
When death approached, but I'm deceived,
For O she's dead.

Yet at my fate I'll no repine—
What is God's will *should aye be mine ;*
Though *seeming* hard, I'll take it kin',
Nor slight the warning,
For in the grave I'll calm recline
Till dawns the morning.

I ne'er durst say, I'm misery's heir,
But aft I little had to spare ;
I've sent a coin, bright, massy, rare,
An' guid be naething ;
Change't, it will goods buy—keep it there,
'Twill be a plaything.

Yours, &c.,

A. AITKEN.

To Mr. David Caldwell, Giffin's Lan', Gateside.

July 1st, 1850.

P.S.—Then mysteries dark will a' be clear,
Truth great and glorious shall appear,
And a' God's ways to mankind here
Proclaimed aloud
Through worlds, and many a distant sphere,
Wise, just, and good.

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Written expressly for this Work,

BY WILLIAM SCOTT DOUGLAS, EDINBURGH.

"AYR OBSERVER," *September 12th, 1871.*

SOME time ago we had the pleasure of receiving and noticing four volumes of the works of our great national Poet, issued from the press of the town whence the immortal works of Burns were first given to the world. These were a *fac-simile* of the first edition of the poet's works, and other three volumes containing his other poems, arranged in chronological order. The works, for style and finish, were acknowledged to be unique of their kind, and worthy the fame of the enterprising publisher. So well were they received that they have already become scarce, and with difficulty to be had. Encouraged by the success attendant on his effort, Mr. M'Kie, the publisher, was induced to attempt a much more difficult and pretentious work: that was a popular edition of all the poems, with life, annotations, and prefatory remarks to each. The result is the two volumes before us.

One would almost have been inclined to think that the entire subject of Burns' works had been completely exhausted, and that no new feature could be introduced into any new edition. The poems themselves have become as well known in every household in the land as the words of Sacred Writ, an inexhaustible mine of poetic beauty and wealth. They are in their individual and separate character, the best exponents of the fire, the energy, and the manliness of the writer. To know them is to know the power that

exists in the bosom of one who was doubtless sent into the world with a mission, and who performed that mission in the spirit of impelling wisdom that welled up and sought an outlet in every part and fibre of his nature. Hence the axiom that the best commentary and the best estimate of any great writer's works are his own works themselves. This, if true in any case at all, was particularly the case with Burns. Writing to the *genus* man everywhere, his works went straight to the heart of man. Each therefore who could read them for himself had in and for himself the very best possible explanation of the works. His own nature and feelings furnished the chief key to unlock the treasures folded up in the poems and songs of Burns. Thus, in one respect, there has always to us seemed little need for annotations and criticism on his works.

The plan pursued in the volumes before us, and the execution of the plan, show that our double estimate has been wrong. Something, nay much, that is novel and striking has been produced in them on Burns and his works, and this something must give such a zest and character to the edition as to make it in reality a popular one. The publisher and the editor appear to have the same qualifications for the work, to have been animated by the same spirit, and to have gone *con amore* into the work they undertook. Both are, and have long been, not merely ardent admirers of Burns and his productions—who is not that?—but to have thoroughly understood all the circumstances of his life, the incidents that led to the production of this or that piece, and to have been able to appreciate, more or less largely, the poetic fervour that pervaded the whole nature of the poet, and consequently of his writings. Both, also, seem to have long and deeply studied the whole subject, and to have been thoroughly conversant with the errors made by former editors; and both have enjoyed the privilege of extraordinary acquaintance with Burns literature. In short, the editor and publisher are and have been, saturated with love to, knowledge and admiration of, the poet. Hence they in these respects were admirably qualified for the work they undertook. And not to multiply laudation, they have done their work, not in a low petifogging spirit of making the best of the thing in a commercial point of view, but in making the best of it in the light of love to, and acquaintance with, the true man that shines, and sparkles, and scintillates in every line of Burns' writings.

The plan of the work is to a large extent original. There is first a chronological summary of the life and writings of the poet. In other words, by a skillful weaving together of what Burns had said of himself and his parents, what Burns' near relations have said, quotations from what former editors have written, and, above all, from notations of and slight notes on the poems, in the order in which they were written, a full and complete word picture of the life of the poet, from the cradle to the grave, has been presented to the reader. By comparing the songs and poems themselves in the order noted in the summary, you have the best criterion of the leading events of his short but chequered career, and the influence they had on him and his, and the influence he exercised on them and the world at large. You can, to some degree, unravel the inner working of the mighty mind and giant intellect that possessed Burns,

and which, towering far above that of the age in which he lived, was ever seeking the upward and the onward—the development of himself and his fellow-men. As we have already said, by this means Burns becomes his own biographer, his own critic, his own commentator, his own expositor; and what better can be had than himself? In this respect the work is truly original. Then follow the entire poems and songs written by Burns. These are arranged strictly chronologically in volume first, all as published and corrected by himself during his lifetime; in volume second we have all his posthumous works.

The chief value of the volumes lies in their chronological order, coupled with the profuse, carefully written, and exhaustive notes furnished to each piece. To some this latter feature will be the best and most attractive. Mr. Douglas has, we think, completely said all that can be said in the way of annotation and explanation. If anything, he errs in profusion of annotation. His anxiety to do justice has had the natural tendency to prolixity of expression. His criticisms are generally just and accurate: his knowledge of the beauties of the poems and songs undeniable; and his appreciation of them keen, and, as a rule, true. Some of his notes may truly be called dissertations. Specially that on the episode of Highland Mary, which is discussed in a manner in the volume as leaves little more to be said on it. In point of fact the notes and annotations are a work in themselves, and will, we doubt not, form a mine whence future editors may find information. When we add that there are in the two volumes several new things with regard to Burns, and several before unpublished lines and verses, we only do justice to the care, earnestness and ability with which the work has been edited. In all respects it is a worthy successor to the hundreds of editions that have gone before, and in many respects exceeds them all in completeness. A single word on the book as a book. For general appearance, clearness of type, and beauty of finish, it is not to be excelled by any book produced out of our large cities. The Kilmarnock press has, in this instance, not belied the *prestige* it has had in the publishing world, but rather added a copestone to former fame.

"AYR ADVERTISER," *November 2nd, 1871.*

If to have a great variety of editions of his works, edited by his countrymen of the highest literary eminence, and received with avidity and read with rapture alike in distant climes as well as in his native land, be the sterling test of immortal fame, then has our Ayrshire Bard attained that distinction to an extent to which none save Homer, Milton, Shakspeare, and Byron have approached. Purists have at times declaimed against his youthful follies, and rigid total abstainers have inveighed against his social excesses, both forgetting that the poet of nature is an imaginative being; often selecting as the objects of his most inflammatory love songs, females he never knew nor spoke to, and depicting with gusto bacchanalian scenes which had no more real existence than the Witches' dance in Alloway Kirk. But the heart of his countrymen warms in truthful

constancy to Burns' memory ; and the ablest writers of the age have rivalled each other in producing the humblest, as well as the most gorgeous editions of his works. Hamilton Paul, Currie, Chambers, Allan Cunningham, Carruthers, Hately Waddel, and others less pretentious, have all thrown their laborious offerings on the Poet's cairn, bringing out every incident of interest in his eventful life illustrative of their texts of both his poetry and prose. The two volumes before us, edited by Mr. Wm. Scott Douglas and just issued by that enterprising publisher Mr. M'Kie, Kilmarnock, though they may not stand favourable comparison in minuteness of criticism and detail with some of the editions alluded to, have an interest which none of these possess in their similarity to the simplicity and clear bold typography of the original Kilmarnock edition. It must not be supposed, however, that the editor's duties have been confined to the mere text of former editions. There is a goodly collection of very valuable notes, some of them now published for the first time ; and we approve very much of one of these being prefixed to each poem explaining its history to the reader at a glance. This is very much more convenient than scattering the information apart from the poem through lengthened dissertation. An engraving of the Poet, from Nasmyth's portrait, is prefixed ; and a copious index annexed. These volumes, from the care bestowed by the editor, the clearness of the typography, and their handiness in two neat 8vo. volumes, not to speak of their cheapness cannot fail to obtain a wide popularity, "hereabout and far awa."

"EVENING COURANT," *Edinburgh, Sept. 15, 1871.*

Of editions and works upon Robert Burns, there seems to be no end. One's first impulse on having a new edition of the poetical works of our national lyrist brought under notice is to dismiss it with a very cursory observation. If any one, however, should, from the numerous lives and editions that are really superfluous, so deal with the two volumes now before us, he would be guilty of a grave blunder. This work is really an acquisition to our voluminous Burns literature, and we have no hesitation in saying it is a very valuable addition. It is evidently meant for the admirers of the poet, for those already familiar with both his life and works, and who are sufficiently enthusiastic to make every small item in regard to either matter of curiosity and interest to them. The publisher is known to Ayrshire men to be an enthusiast in Burns literature, while the editor is evidently not less so, and has devoted an amount of loving care to the preparation of these volumes for which no return in cash he is likely to receive can be adequate recompense.

First of all, with reference to the externals and accidents of the volumes, they are tastefully and carefully got up, clearly and excellently printed on fine paper, and are not too large to be cumbrous or troublesome to handle. But it is only when we come minutely to examine the contents that we discover the amount of honest and unostentatious toil that has been bestowed upon the volumes. The

editor may not always be very elegant as a stylist, but he has done his work after the most laborious fashion. In the first volume we have all the pieces published during the poet's lifetime. Prefixed, is a memoir of the poet on a somewhat novel plan, and the volume is studded with notes and annotations. Every song and poem is preceded by an introductory note giving an account of all that is known about it, the circumstance of its composition, its object and references, and so forth. Then at the end we have a sufficiently ample glossary, including the glossaries of the author as given in both his Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions. We have said the life is composed on a new plan, and it is this. The editor gives in separate paragraphs which follow each other in chronological order the extracts from Burns' own autobiographical sketch, illustrating the various periods and events of his life, and thereafter he gives similiar extracts from his brother Gilbert's narrative, from the poet's own letters, and whatever else of a contemporary character in Burns' literature will throw light on the biography. The editor's own notes are studiously brief, always to the point, and usually full of information. By this means the reader obtains all the information at first or second hand which exists on the subject of Burns, and the editor is judicious in giving selections from other biographers and eulogists illustrating the poet's character. The life is thus far more valuable to the Burns' student than a much more ample and elaborate biography would have been. We may also add, that Burns' own prefaces and dedications are given; and prefixed to the poems in the first volume we have a *fac-simile* of the title-page of the original Kilmarnock edition of 1786. We need hardly say that with so ardent a worshipper of the poet as his present editor, no attempt has been made by castrating the poems or songs to make them suitable to refined tastes. This may be an objection to the work with some; but it will be a further recommendation to the admirers of the poet. The second volume of this "Kilmarnock Popular Edition" contains, also arranged in chronological order and split into separate groups, all the posthumous pieces of Burns; and is liberally supplied on the same plan as is carried out in the first, with biographical notices, new annotations, &c., &c. For instance, we have here "Songs by Burns, in Johnson's Fifth Volume," which was published shortly after the poet's death; "Posthumous works" first published by Dr. Gurrie in 1800; "Posthumous Pieces, from various sources, dating chiefly between 1808 and 1834," and so on. It is remarkable and curious to find how many of Burns' best and most popular songs —such as "Auld Langsyne," "Highland Mary," "My Nannie's awa," "A Red, Red Rose," "Duncan Gray," and a host of others —were first given to the world after the bard's death, In addition to the genuine writings of Burns there were a considerable number of fabricated fragments attributed to him, and various songs of some of which the authors are still undiscovered, while the authorship of others has since been ascertained. These are all given or referred to here, besides numerous memoranda of old ballads first recovered by Burns, and of his Notes on certain old songs, &c., &c. We also find the various pieces collected by and which first appeared in the successive editions of Cunningham, Hogg, Motherwell, and Robert Chambers. Last of all we have a "Bibliotheca Burnsiana," contain-

ing much interesting information about the poet and his works, and an admirable United General Index at the end. Our readers will thus see that our praises of this edition, high as they may seem, have been all fairly earned. The "Kilmarnock Popular Edition" of Burns' Poetical Works will prove a valuable treasure to all lovers of the Bard; and we cannot close without expressing the gratitude which Burns' students must feel towards both the editor and his publisher. The volumes are most creditable to Kilmarnock, and well worthy of the town in which the first edition of the poet's works saw the light.

"NORTH BRITISH DAILY MAIL," *Glasgow, Sept. 19, 1871.*

THESE volumes fulfil in a remarkable degree the first condition of all successful enterprise—those responsible for them are thoroughly in love with their work. Editor and publisher are, in this respect, well mated. Both are enthusiasts in regard to Burns. Both have treasured up every scrap of information they ever came across regarding him or his works. Both have prosecuted with painstaking care the task of authenticating and substantiating the stories that are afloat concerning him. The editor makes express and handsome acknowledgment of his obligation to the publisher in this respect; and we feel ourselves warranted in saying that, between them, they have produced the best, the most serviceable, the most satisfactory, and the most informing edition of the great peasant poet, that has ever seen the light.

The arrangement of the volumes is excellent. They contain every poetical scrap from the pen of Burns that has ever been published. A chronological sequence of the most complete and appropriate character, is observed in their presentment. The first volume includes all the pieces that were published during the author's life-time and under his own supervision. Thus we get in the forefront a reprint of the original Kilmarnock edition of his works. This is followed by the pieces that were added to the Edinburgh edition of 1787. After this come the songs produced for the successive volumes of Johnson's "Musical Museum" in the order of their appearance there. And finally, we have the "additional poems" from the author's edition of 1793, along with the songs from Thomson published while he was alive. Every piece has an introductory note, giving an account of all that is known concerning it; and the manner in which, by a reference to the circumstances of composition, and by a clearing up of allusions and intention, the meaning as illustrated is very notable and satisfying. All the more is this the case when a reference is made to the "life" which introduces the first volume. It, too, is constructed upon a novel plan. In a sense the editor has contributed nothing of his own to the memoir. It consists solely of extracts from the writings of other people. The autobiographic sketch of the poet, the reminiscences of his brother Gilbert, and the various narratives of successive critics and biographers are all drawn upon—the extracts from each being disposed in a gem-like setting which has the effect of bringing out, with a startling distinctness, the leading incidents of the career which is thus traced. The second volume is arranged

upon a similiar plan. It contains all the posthumous publications of pieces attributed to the poet, in the order of their appearance. Thus it begins with the songs contributed to Johnson's fifth volume, and goes on through the works of Thomson, Currie, Cromek, &c., down to the editions of Chambers and Waddell, each piece being prefaced as in the former volume. The amount of diligence and trouble thus entailed upon the editor simply defies calculation ; but the ease, the information, the charm, which are, by this method, invariably communicated to the reader are equally inestimable.

"DUMFRIES STANDARD," *September 20, 1871.*

HERE we have in two handsome duodecimo volumes a new edition of the national bard. It has been brought out at the instance of Mr. James M'Kie, Kilmarnock, well-known in connection with Burnsiana literature, and who has been the means of again identifying with the poet a town that will ever be distinguished as the publication birthplace of the most wonderful book of verses that ever issued from the press. In 1869 Mr. M'Kie published a well-executed fac-simile of the first or Kilmarnock edition of Burns' works; and Mr. Douglas, the competent editor of the one now before us, states that his assistance was requested by Mr. M'Kie to "bring out for popular circulation a more complete and accurate edition of the poems and songs of Burns than has hitherto been presented to the public." "For the plan of these twin-volumes," it is added, "the one shewing in successive groups all the poems and songs which the poet lived to see in print, and the other containing his posthumous publications similarly arranged—thus telling of *life* in the one, *death* in the other, and *immortality* in both—the editor is alone responsible." In Chambers' edition the writings of the poet are chronologically arranged, so that the time and circumstances of their production can readily be traced; but the new Kilmarnock edition differs from it in this respect, by shewing at a glance what poems were issued under the author's own personal supervision, and those which saw the light from time to time after the hand that had penned them had lost its cunning, and the heart that had conceived them had ceased to beat.

Let us state in more explicit terms the chief peculiarities of this new issue. The first volume, with a *fac.simile* of the original Kilmarnock edition, contains, as group first, a reproduction of everything that appeared in it; next, as group second, the pieces added in the Edinburgh edition of 1787; then the three songs contributed to the first volume of "Johnson's Musical Museum;" then the more copious supplies sent successively to other volumes of the "Museum" from 1788 till 1792; then the additional poems, with the "Tam o' Shanter" masterpiece, published in the author's two-volumed edition of date 1793; and, lastly, the songs which he sent to Thomson, closing with the charming ballad of the "The Soldier's Return"—the last of the bard's compositions that he lived to see in print. To the rich Dumfries minstrelsy of Burns the second volume is chiefly devoted; it includes the lyrics which he produced for Johnson's fifth and sixth volumes; those with which he favoured Thomson, first published in

his collection in 1798 and 1799, finishing with the fine lyric, "Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear; the songs furnished for Thomson, but first printed by Dr. Currie in 1800; the miscellaneous posthumous poems first printed by Currie; and then in distinctive sections the poems severally published at various periods by Stewart, Cromek, Cunningham, Hogg and Motherwell, Chambers, and other editors or collectors.

The memoir, which professes to be "on a plan now first adopted," contributes also to render this edition of Burns unique. It reads almost like a diary that has been kept by several individuals on the same subject. The editor dips now into the poet's autobiographic sketch, then into his correspondence, then into the reminiscences of his brother Gilbert, takes a snatch of what has been said of him by Currie, Cromek, Cunningham, Carlyle, and others; chronicles his productions at every stage, and arranging all these items in chronological order, makes them tell the whole story of the poet's wonderful career. Viewed as supplementary to any regular biography of the bard this design is excellent, commending itself by its graphic power and freshness. Further, by the way of making the history of Burns and of his works still more complete, each piece is introduced by a few remarks explanatory of its origin and relationship; these annotations, generally speaking, being correct, exhaustive, and otherwise satisfactory; and the wonder is, that in a work which is at once broadly comprehensive in its scope, and microscopic in its details, so little is to be seen requiring to be challenged or corrected. This new Kilmarnock edition of Burns will be hailed with hearty welcome by his admirers in all parts of the world: it has been felicitously conceived and carefully executed; and considering the vast amount of head-work required for its production, its completeness, and its typographical beauty, it must be reckoned low priced at half-a-guinea. We confidently anticipate for it an immense circulation.

"LADIES' OWN JOURNAL," *Edinburgh, Septr. 23, 1871.*

We would gladly devote some space to a notice of this uncommon publication, but having already, during the progress of the work, directed attention to its distinguishing characteristics, we believe that by presenting our readers from time to time with a few abstracts from its pages a better idea of its peculiar features will be conveyed than by our attempting anything in the form of a review.

The editor is very full in his notes on those lyrics of Burns which refer to "Highland Mary," the object of one of his burning and apparently blameless loves, Some twenty-two years ago he produced, as the result of a long and searching inquiry into this subject, an elaborate essay, which was rewarded with the approval and commendations of Robert Chambers, Professor Wilson, and others who had made the biography of the poet one of their pet studies. This had the effect of revolutionizing all pre-established theories regarding the date and character of that unique love-passage in the poet's history. In the present undertaking Mr. Douglas appears to have pursued and thrown farther light on his favourite theme, without in the least slighting other notable matters, in the course of his path as an editor and biographer, following the main subject in hand.

"PAISLEY HERALD," *September 23, 1871.*

Mr. M'Kie of Kilmarnock, so well known as the publisher of the *fac-simile* of the precious Kilmarnock edition of *Burns' Works*, has just published another edition of *Burns* in two handy volumes, which he calls the Kilmarnock popular edition. It appears very complete, and is very rich in annotation of a valuable kind. There is a memoir of the poet by Mr William Scott Douglas of Edinburgh, which besides being very satisfactory as regards the information given, is specially interesting on account of the method adopted. It is called a chronological Summary of the Life and Writings of Burns, and it makes Burns in his autobiography and his correspondence, and Burns' friends in their letters, very much write the life of the great Scottish poet. The edition is perhaps the most complete ever published, and the latest admirers of Burns will thank the editor and publisher for acting on the following sentence :—"That refined portion of the Poet's admirers who can relish his inspiration only after it has been distilled and filtered into a 'well undefiled,' in the form of a 'Family Edition,' need not expect to find *here* much sympathy with their peculiar tastes ; for no castration, suppression, or vitiation of the Author's text has been resorted to, nor has a single known production of his muse been excluded that can really bear the light of print."

"INVERNESS COURIER," *October 12, 1871.*

Editions of Burns flow on and will for ever flow ! The publisher of this reprint produced some years since a *fac-simile* of the first Kilmarnock edition. As the original work was rare and costly, and the *fac-simile* skillfully executed, the volume was deservedly successful, and the publisher has been tempted to print the whole of the poetical works. The volumes are neat and handy—compact and firm—just of that size which Dr. Johnson disiderated in a book, such as can be held easily in the hand and read by the fireside. To add to the "completeness," a memoir and annotations are added by a gentleman who some twenty years since fixed the date of Burns' final intercourse with Highland Mary, and thus to some extent disenchanted that scene of tenderness and romance. Mr. Douglas has discharged his editorial duties with care, and his notes comprise much interesting information in small space.

"THE DAILY REVIEW," *Edinburgh, October 23, 1871.*

The Kilmarnock press has the distinction of having first brought the poetry of Burns before his countrymen and the world. It has now the honour of having produced the most complete collection of the poet's writings. The most ardent admirers of Burns have not been able hitherto to content themselves with one edition of his works. It was necessary to possess several editions in order to have a complete repository of the poet's effusions in prose and verse, the facts of his life, and the Burns literature. All this is now brought within the compass of the two volumes edited by Mr. Douglas and published

by Mr. M'Kie. We name editor and publisher togther, for if wee mistake not, the publisher has collected the greater part of the new material which the editor has woven into his narrative and embodied in his annotations. Mr. M'Kie has long been known as an enthusiast in everything relating to the life and works and associations of the national bard, and his name will now be lastingly associated with that of Burns as the most painstaking and successful illustrator of his life and writings. The highest recommendation of the new edition is that it includes every line Burns is known to have written, and the pieces erroneously ascribed to him, traced to their real authorship where that is known. The speciality which ranks next in point of value is that the poems and songs are all chronologically arranged, and notes supplied to explain fully the circumstances under which they were written. The original Kilmarnock edition is given first, along with a *fac-simile* of the title-page, and then follow what was added in the Edinburgh edition of 1787, the songs in Johnson's "Musical Museum," and the additional poems in the author's edition of 1793. The second volume contains all the posthumous pieces in the order of their publication, each successive edition of the poet's works, down to the latest, being laid under contribution for this purpose. At the end of the second volume Mr. M'Kie gives a list of all the editions of Burns' Life and Works known by him to have been published. The list comprises seventy-two editions in America alone, two French, and thirteen German Translations. The work is rendered very convenient for reference by a comprehensive general index and intelligible to every English reader by a copious glossary.

"THE SCOTSMAN," *Edinburgh, October 27, 1871.*

Some people may have thought that, in the multitude of editions of Burns' poems, everything was to be found relating to the poet that could be of interest. The publication of this "Kilmarnock edition" proves that such a conclusion would be wholly wrong. Editor and publisher here seem to have worked together to produce an edition of Burns which would put all previous editions into the shade. The title of the book indicates pretty clearly the general idea which has influenced its editor and publisher in its arrangement; but it in no wise conveys a notion of the great amount of loving labour bestowed upon the work. The editor has exercised great discrimination, not in omitting facts, but in shewing their precise bearing. The memoir with which the first volume opens is unlike anything of the kind that we have seen. It is not a closely-connected narrative, but a series of quotations from writers on Burns, with comments by the editor, excerpts from the poet's letters, and lists of his poems written at the particular period being touched upon. The effect is not altogether good at first sight, but the memoir grows upon the reader, until it has a positive attraction, and appears to convey far more clearly than any polished narrative an insight into Burns' career. To every poem in the volume there is prefixed a short account of the circumstances under which it was written. Altogether, the Kilmarnock edition is unique, and what is more to the purpose, it is indispensable to every one who wishes to study Burns with care.

"THE STAR," *Glasgow, October 31, 1871.*

THOUGH Kilmarnock, according to one of its living bards, is "famed for bonnets, plaids, and shoon," and also for many other branches of manufacture, as well as its important connection, nowadays, with the trade in coal and iron, it must ever remain one of its proudest boasts that from its printing-press there was issued, eighty-five years ago, the first edition of the poetical works of Robert Burns. This circumstance has been the means of making the capital of Cunninghame known over the world, and gives its name a classic significance and imperishable charm to all the lovers of song. Nor do the people of Kilmarnock, in the midst of all their growing material prosperity, allow the fact to be forgotten among themselves. They dwell on it with a pardonable complacency—a feeling which is justly intensified by the recollection that their town, to use the words of the local historian, cherished Burns in the days of his adversity, and furnished him with warmly appreciative and most helpful friends when friends were few, and before his fame was widely spread. The feeling finds its most notable exponent in the local publisher who within the last few years has furnished the admirers of the bard with no fewer than three choice editions of his works. The first of these was a perfect *fac-simile* of the first Kilmarnock edition turned out in the very form in which it was produced in the July of 1786 by John Wilson—who, by the way, does not seem to have been the "Wee Johnnie" of the poet's epigram, and who ought to be remembered with no little respect as the man who first planted a printing-press in Ayrshire. No sooner had Mr. James M'Kie completed his initial effort by the publication of the *fac-simile* than he set himself to work out another idea; and in 1869 we received at his hands a superb three-volume edition, printed with the same type as the *fac-simile*, and giving in their proper order all the productions of the poet that were issued subsequently to the original Kilmarnock edition. This was a beautiful work, and combined with material elegance a fidelity to the text of the author worthy of the highest praise. But the task to which Mr. M'Kie had set himself in his loving enthusiasm for Burns was not yet done; and now we have received from him, in two compact volumes, what he calls the "Kilmarnock Popular Edition," in which all the poems are arranged in the order of their earliest publication, and a memoir of the poet given on a plan never before adopted, besides new annotations, introductory notices, etc., written expressly for the work. The memoir is a brief and most admirably executed compilation, correcting many inaccuracies into which previous biographers and essayists have allowed themselves to slip; and the notes, the fruit of Mr. M'Kie's well-directed investigations, extending over many years, are even more valuable than the life. There is hardly a note that has not some thoroughly fresh point in it, either of fact or racy criticism. Thus, in the introduction to the third poem, an explanation is for the first time given of why the poet in his "Earnest Cry and Prayer," addresses *Irish Lords* as among the "Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons," A reference to the almanacs of the period shows the names of several Irish peers, on the list of Scotland's "chosen Five-and-Forty." Election patronage in North Britain was then in the hands of a very

few dominant Dukes and Earls, whose daughters were frequently allied in marriage to poor Peers of Erin, who then, as now, were fain to improve their fortunes by any likely shift of position, and found no difficulty in being elected Scotch Members of Parliament. The poet winced under this implied disgrace, and his reference to the Irish Lords is, therefore, strongly satirical. An Edinburgh edition of Burns, we are told, altered the reading of the first line to "Ye Scottish Lords," an impertinence which of course robbed the line of its point. This is only one of many original features that are to be found in Mr. M'Kie's edition, showing the minute care that has been taken in its preparation.

"DUNDEE ADVERTISER," *November 6, 1871.*

THIS is the most recent and one of the fullest editions of the Scottish Poet. It contains the "complete poetical works of Burns, arranged in the order of their earliest publication." In the first volume we find all the pieces published in his lifetime, with a memoir of the Poet on a plan now first adopted, with new annotations, introductory notices, &c. The second contains all his posthumous pieces, along with new notes and introductions. The whole may be regarded as (with the exception of a number of loose verses which Burns on his deathbed deeply regretted) a thoroughly complete and final, as well as an admirably arranged edition of Burns' publishable poems. Indeed, the "rigidly righteous" will complain that a good many effusions are retained which should have been suppressed, and perhaps they are for once right as well as righteous in this. The volumes, like Burns' own second edition, are dedicated to the Caledonian Hunt.

Glancing over these two thick and thickly filled volumes, our amazement has been again more than ever kindled at the extraordinary quantity as well as quality of Burns' poetry.

"GLASGOW DAILY HERALD," *Nov. 9, 1871.*

KILMARNOCK is famous for more things than the manufacture of blue bonnets. It was in that town that the first edition of Robert Burns' Poems was published some 85 years since; and it is from the press of the same town that the latest edition of those immortal effusions has just been issued—this also, like the poet's first Edinburgh edition of 1787 has been dedicated to the gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt. Burns' first publisher was a man named Wilson; his latest printer and publisher is James M'Kie, who is well known in the West country to be one of the most devout admirers of the Poet, as well as the possessor of one of the amplest libraries of what Mr. Douglas calls *Burns-Literature.* Mr. Douglas informs us that "it was the desire of Mr. M'Kie that the present editor should assist him in bringing out, for popular circulation, a more complete and accurate edition of the Poems and Songs of Burns than has hitherto been presented to the public." This was certainly a most commendable object. While Burns' admirers have been chiefly among

the laymen of the world, in exceptional cases his most fulsome eulogists have been found among the clergy. Between the black-wash party and the white-wash party we have had a pretty time of it. We should say that the opinion of the one set is worth about as much as the opinion of the other. The difference between them is the difference between theatrical blue fire, and theatrical red fire. Any person who wishes to form for himself an approximately accurate conception of Burns' character, must bundle into the same limbo of fiction both detractors and eulogists. If he wishes to deal fairly with the dead poet and his living memory, he must endeavour to look carefully at the facts, and faithfully sift them. In this process he will gain some help from the labours of Mr. Douglas, who edits Mr. M'Kie's new edition. It is one great merit of this re-issue that it does not present any new specific life of the poet. The judgment of the student is not forestalled or beglamoured by a theory, but rather tempted to act for itself. Mr. Douglas groups the leading facts of Burns' career under their proper dates. The facts under each date are not always given in Mr. Douglas' own language, but almost invariably in the language of others—in that, for instance, of the Poet himself, his brother Gilbert, his sister Mrs. Begg, his school-masters, his local acquaintances, his famous admirers, his benefactors, his publishers, or his numerous biographers and critics. The date of each composition is also given as it occurs in the stream of facts. This method of dealing with the career of the Poet is described by the editor as a "Chronological Summary of the Life and Writings of Burns;" but summary as it is, it supplies the reader with a full body of biographical statement, from which to deduce an independent view of one of the most remarkable, picturesque, and tragic lives in the whole range of literary history. It has necessarily a fragmentary aspect; but we confess that we rather like it with its well-selected store of extracts from many notable and some noble sources. Considering that we are already rich in "lives" and "sketches" of Burns, and in essays on his poetic genius, Mr. Douglas' chronological scheme may be accepted as an interesting variation to the usual stereotyped memoir.

In the first of these volumes Mr. Douglas has arranged, "in successive groups, all the poems and songs which the author lived to see in print;" and in the second, the Poet's "posthumous publications are arranged in a similiar manner." * * * We are inclined to think that in spite of the partiality of the public, a good number of versicles might have been dispensed with, without detriment to either the public or the fame of the Poet. Mr. Douglas' prefatory notes to the various groups of poems and songs, and the notes which he prefixes to each separate poem or song, are, for the most part, carefully written, although some readers may not unreasonably think that in this department of the work there are occasional symptoms of over editing. Nevertheless, as Scotchmen can stand any amount of writing on the subject of Burns, what his present editor has done will doubtless be welcome enough, down even to the "Bibliotheca Burnsiana."

It ought to be mentioned that Mr. Douglas was the first to discover the true history of the "Highland Mary" episode in Burns' life.

The facts of it, which are given in the "Chronological Summary," are sufficiently striking, showing, as they do, how very extensive and cosmopolitan were the affections of the poet. * * *

We may add that Mr. M'Kie's edition is, in a typographical point of view, a credit to the town of "Killie."

"THE EXAMINER," *London, Nov. 11, 1871.*

THE Kilmarnock edition of BURNS has been superintended by Mr. W. S. Douglas, who long ago discovered some important material relating to the poet's connection with Highland Mary, and who has been during more than twenty years collecting notes and illustrations to the life and writings of his favourite. He here gives, by way of introduction, a very useful chronological summary, chiefly made up of extracts from Burns' autobiography, and from the work of previous editors, and his edition of the poems themselves is also strictly chronological, following the lead of the original Kilmarnock edition. The first volume contains all that was printed during Burns' life and under his own direction; the second contains his posthumous works. In a useful appendix Mr. Douglas enumerates all the editions of Burns that have been published in this country between 1786 and 1870, besides seventy-two American editions, two French translations, and thirteen German editions and translations. Altogether Mr. Douglas has produced a very cheap, useful, and creditable work.

"DAILY COURIER," *Liverpool, December 4, 1871.*

THE two handsome volumes just published contain all the known, and also most of the attributed, poetical effusions of Robert Burns, the great peasant bard of Scotland, whose songs and lyrical contributions to the literary riches of his country have never been excelled, and rarely, if at all, equalled.

In no previous edition have the labours of the editor been more zealously or more perseveringly rendered. Every known source; and many very imperfectly known, have been carefully examined to embody a copious as well as a faithful collection of the warblings of that sweet songster who rendered melodious the banks of the Doon, the Ayr and the Nith,

Several of the pieces introduced might have been omitted without in any degree impairing the excellence of the collection or derogating from the fame of the author; as, however, the object has been to supply a full and undiluted edition of the poetical writings of the bard, this fault, if fault it may be called, is but a venial one. The explanatory notes must generally be conceded to be at once interesting and judicious, and on the whole the plan which has been laid down has been intelligently and faithfully carried out.

The style in which the book has been got up reflects much credit on the good taste and liberality of the publisher, who has in previous instances evinced commendable enthusiasm in presenting to the public reliable and interesting editions of the works of Burns,—an enthusiasm engendered and encouraged without doubt by the circumstance that he occupies the premises and carries on the business under the auspices of which the effusions of the then unknown minstrel were first brought under the notice of his fellow-countrymen, and from which arose that fame which has now spread to all the ends of the earth. The present edition is worthy of extensive appreciation, which it is to be hoped will be freely bestowed on it.

"DAILY TELEGRAPH," *London, December 8, 1871.*

WHOEVER may desire to possess an unadulterated, or rather unmutilated, Burns, "racy of the soil," cannot do better than send for the "Kilmarnock Popular Edition" (James M'Kie), in two narrow, old-fashioned volumes, reprinted from the *fac-simile* of the poet's 1786 edition, and abundantly annotated by an enthusiastic editor, Mr. William Scott Douglas, who has long laboured in love about the life and works of the Scottish bard. The first volume contains all the poems published during Burns' lifetime, the second all his posthumous pieces. Each poem has its own few fit lines of explanation; and there is prefixed a chronological memoir of the poet, on a singular and effective principle—for it consists entirely of quotations from Burns' autobiography, letters, or works, from the statements of friends, and from public or other documents, arranged in sequence of time, and telling the story better than any elaborate memoir could do. Altogether the book is something fresh and good; and its mechanical preparation does great credit to the unpretending Ayrshire press from which it issues. By contrast, the Messrs. Moxon's gilded and finely illustrated "Poetical Works of Robert Burns" seems tame and flat.

"NOTES AND QUERIES," *London, December 11, 1871.*

MR. M'KIE, whose special mission it seems to do honour to the memory of the Ayrshire Bard by publishing editions of his poems in every form which the admirers of Burns can possibly desire, has, under the title of the "Kilmarnock Popular Edition," produced in a couple of volumes a collection of Burns' Poems more complete than any that has yet appeared. Whether in so doing he quite attains the object he has in view, namely, that of doing full honour to the memory of Burns, is of course a matter of opinion. We believe that course would be more surely accomplished by the judicious omission of much which the poet himself would have "wished to blot." But to all who desire to have every scrap of verse, good or bad, which the great Scotch Lyrist ever comitted to paper, this "Kilmarnock Popular Edition" of Burns will prove a most welcome book.

"LEEDS MERCURY," *29th August, 1872.*

EVERY admirer of Burns is indebted to Mr. M'Kie for this complete and handsome edition of the poet's works. In the arrangement of the volumes a somewhat novel plan has been adopted, every song and poem being preceded by an introductory note giving an account of all that is known about it, the circumstances of its composition, as well as its object and references. The memoir of the poet, ably written by Mr. William Scott Douglas, of Edinburgh, has also the merit of ingenuity in its preparation. Just as in a recently published autobiography of John Milton the leading features in his career were presented in a connected form by means of extracts from his own writings, so in this case the life-history of Robert Burns is sketched by means of snatches from his own correspondence, and extracts from the reminiscences of his brother Gilbert and others. The first volume of this edition includes all the pieces that were published during the author's lifetime and under his own supervision. Thus we get in the forefront a reprint of the original Kilmarnock edition of his works. This is followed by the pieces that were added to the Edinburgh edition of 1787. After this comes the songs produced for the successive volumes of Johnson's "Musical Museum," in the order of their appearance there. And finally, we have the "additional poems" from the author's edition of 1793, along with the songs from Thomson published while he was alive. The second volume contains, also arranged in chronological order and split into separate groups, all the posthumous pieces of Burns. For instance, we have here, "Songs by Burns, in Johnson's Fifth Volume," which was published shortly after the poet's death; "Posthumous Works first published by Dr. Currie in 1800;" "Posthumous Pieces from Various Sources, dating chiefly between 1808 and 1834," and so on. It is remarkable and curious to find how many of Burns' best and most popular songs—such as "Auld Lang Syne," "Highland Mary," "My Nannie's awa," "A Red, Red Rose," "Duncan Gray," and a host of others—were first given to the world after the bard's death. In addition to the genuine writings of Burns there were a considerable number of fabricated fragments attributed to him, and various songs of some of which the authors are still undiscovered, while the authorship of others has since been ascertained. These are all given or referred to here, besides numerous memoranda of old ballads first recovered by Burns, and of his Notes on certain old songs, &c., &c. We also find the various pieces collected by and which first appeared in the successive editions of Cunningham, Hogg, Motherwell, and Robert Chambers. Last of all we have a "Bibliotheca Burnsiana," containing much interesting information about the poet and his works, an admirable united general index, and a copious glossary for the benefit of English readers, In every respect the edition is an admirable one.

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